

Hiding in Plain Sight

Jerimiah 31:7-14;

John 1:1-9; 10-18;

On Christmas Day, I thought I had lost my wedding rings. They were not in my jewelry case in the normal spot and in a hurry, I had to head to church for the morning Lessons and Carols worship. So, I left without them – but on the way, I went through all the places they could be: Did I put them in that coat pocket while putting on lotion? Did I take them off while I was downstairs? Did I somehow lose them entirely?

I was wracking my brain wondering where they were, somewhat worried about finding them. But then, once I got in the routine of worship, I let it go and then when returning home, I found

them. They were next to my jewelry case, plain as day, right in front of my eyes. They never were lost. They were right there all along, pretty much near the place I usually put them at night.

A couple days ago, my husband Jim did a similar thing where he asked where his glasses were and both of us began to laugh just when he realized and I saw that they were quite snugly comfortable right on the top of his head. Been there, done that. I'm sure you relate, don't you? These momentary lapses when your mind is elsewhere are not abnormal. Whether it's your keys, your glasses, or where you left your coffee cup on top of your car, it happens to everyone.

The readings for this Second Sunday of Christmas remind me of

those strange lapses. Similarly, we look for God to be present with us. We long to catch a glimpse and know how it is the creator of the universe is with us. The first chapter of John puts it right there - God was there all along in the beginning.

Jesus, the Word, the Incarnate One was there all along, but we couldn't see him until his physical fleshiness walked with us right in front of our very own eyes. Light and word, creation and presence, all made manifest in a person because we couldn't see what was right in front of us all along.

The writer of this Gospel of John tells us, too, that even walking with human beings, there were those who still could not see God through Jesus the Christ. Even in front of their eyes, some still

couldn't see it. Even at the Resurrection, they couldn't. For them, Jesus remained hidden right in front of them.

I think that this notion of not seeing what is right there is a perfect ending to the year that was 2020. There was nothing more confounding, more confusing and more extraordinary than this last year. With the pandemic, the isolation, the political turmoil and constant change in what was happening next, sometimes in hours, not days, God often seemed hidden to us.

Sometimes, it felt like and still feels like it to me now at worship - the hope that despite the fact that I can't SEE you through this TV though time and space, you are still there watching this worship, hearing the sound, singing the songs, and responding to "The

Lord be with you.” You are right in front of me, but hidden from my sight. And yet, the nature of faith is knowing that you are still there attending to worship in this TV Ministry. We are “Together in God” as our title indicates.

Therefore, not only did those first followers of Jesus need the person of John to point to the tangible Godhead right in front of them. Today, we need people like this, too. We need those like John to point to the light of Christ among us that light so clearly is there but seemingly hidden. We need this, the beloved community known as church to be that visible, tangible body pointing to where God is and THAT God is right in front of us.

As we go forward into this New Year of 2021, let us remember that 2020 was

not devoid of Christ walking among us. I do not mean to gloss over what was and is so difficult, nor deny the losses we have keenly felt, but before we enter fully into a new year according to the Roman calendar, we should reflect upon the old year and see just where God was right in front of our very eyes.

In your lives, how was Christ made manifest in even this extraordinary and strange time in people, in situation, in blessing but also in difficulty and trial? And, in this New Year, a new chance, where now is Christ present and yet, you have not seen him, right in front of you? Perhaps God is blessing you in ways you cannot see. How is Christ manifest for you today?

Christ was there all along, right in front of us. Not all of 2020 was in

darkness. So, as we gather today and look to our hopes for a New Year, knowing some of it will still be difficult, awkward, and impatient, how will you point to the light that is in plain sight even though you may think it is hidden, so that others may also see what is right in front of them, the grace and love of God through Christ Jesus.

Yes. Indeed. In the beginning was the Word and that creative, redeeming Word, Jesus Christ draws near, turning our mourning into joy, our sorrow into comfort, and inviting us to join the dance of the universe that has been right in front of us all along. Amen.