



Advent Reflection for Thursday, December 22nd

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John 1: 6-13

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.*

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own,* and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

Reflection by Kallen Tsikalas:

When I initially reflected on this passage, my mind was drawn to its final words: Faith allows us to become children of God. We are beloved and valuable not because of our own work or will (“born not of blood or at the will of the flesh”) but because of our relationship with God.

Thinking of my own life and accomplishments (many falling short of my ambitions), I was relieved and encouraged by the thought of not having to work hard for something. Of simply being asked to accept and receive this gift from God, and knowing that God had created me whole.

Last week, however, illuminated something more in the reading. My mom was injured in a fall, and I flew to St. Louis to help with her care. While in the nursing facility, I spent many hours with seniors in various states of memory health and decline. Some couldn’t remember where they were or why they were there. Some couldn’t remember who they were.

It made Mom happy to be with these folks, so we sought out their company... in the dining and activity rooms, the chapel, and the hallways. Mom didn’t notice their impairments; she was overjoyed by their

presence. She delighted in the woman who insisted on using her cookies as bingo chips and the one who nudged up to talk with us about her rabbits (she'd started with 2 and ended up with 1300!). And even as Mom, herself, struggled enormously to stay lucid, she never failed to notice the beauty in her nurses and aides, complimenting them profusely on their appearance and names and skill.

When I read this passage again after 5 days with my mom, something different leapt from the page. With his purity, goodness and courage, John was sent to *witness and testify to the light*. Of course, John heralded the arrival of Jesus, one even more pure and good and courageous.

But I wonder if perhaps we are all called to be like John. Sent to witness and testify to the light—the light within every person. The light that requires no work or will, maybe not even memory. Just the gift of being a child of God.

Kallen Tsikalas and her family (Scott, Halcy, and Lulu the dog) have been attending Holy Apostles for about 8 years. She loves trees and rocks and fungi and babbling brooks, and wandering by foot and mind. She is a social insights researcher.

