



Advent Reflection for Friday, December 23rd

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John 1: 14-18

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me."') From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Reflection by Loyal Miles:

December 23. The day before the day before. As I write this, there's a slight chance of snow in the forecast for the 23rd, and I'm hoping for that—the first snow of the year to help highlight the transition to a Christmas weekend that of course is much more than the usual Saturday-Sunday of slowing down and then ramping up again.

From his fullness we have all received.

As we look with holy expectation to Christmas Eve and for arrival in the joyful sanctuary of Christmas Day, it feels essential to reflect a bit on what we've received. As I look back across the Advent reflections shared by members of the church this week (thank you, Laura, Larisa, Peter, and Kallen!), I feel blessed in receiving their words naming so much of what I experience as essential activities of Advent: treasuring and pondering . . . mystery and wonder . . . naming and inspiration . . . relying on God including through the dark moments . . . our being beloved and valued first and foremost in our relationship with God . . . knowing who we are . . . delighting in presence . . . or as Kallen puts it, in *"the light that requires no work or will, maybe not even memory. Just the gift of being a child of God."*

In reading and rereading the words shared in the reflections throughout this week, it's become impossible not to think about today's Gospel passage and "the Word" living "among us" . . . "full of grace and truth."

As I've read and reread today's passage, John's example has increasingly crystallized as a challenge: How will I *testify and cry out* to the reality of God in us and among us!

Answering that challenge will be a work in progress for me. The thorns that rise up to choke the would-be bud of faith as described in one of Jesus's parables feel pervasive in much of my current day-to-day as I bend and strain to balance commitments to family and work. Perhaps a first small step then: this holy weekend, I'll be looking with my family to practice at least some small acts of *testimony* through which this Christmas Eve and Christmas Day we might pause to share in the treasuring and pondering and the trying to name and know "his fullness we have all received."

As we prepare now for the waking tomorrow into Christmas Eve (into the gift of being a child of God), here's some of the poetry of today's passage that has become a kind of refrain for me this Advent season:

Among us . . . his glory . . . testified to him . . . cried out . . . his fullness . . . we have all received . . . grace upon grace . . . Jesus . . . the only Son . . . the Father's heart . . . known.

Loyal and his wife Lisa live in Windsor Terrace with their son Isaac and daughter Frances.

