

Joseph's Technicolour Eucharist

As part of our series of services on the Biblical story of Joseph, we went as a church community to see a production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical, Joseph And His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat at a local theatre. It was an spectacular performance and certainly brought the story alive. We were also struggling to find hymns to sing on the theme of Joseph and so we sang along to some of the songs from the show.

We had quite a discussion as part of the service following our theatre trip. Much of the discussion centred around the lack of women in the story, until we discovered that apart from Rachel and Leah and the maidservants, Zilpha and Bilhah, there is also Joseph's forgotten sister Dinah. In an attempt to capture some of the themes of the discussion I frantically scribbled notes on flipchart paper. Then, while the adults helped the children to tie die t-shirts to make their own technicolour dreamcoats, it was my job to transform the notes into the Eucharistic liturgy to bring everything together at the end of the service – no pressure then! This was the result, the story told from Dinah's perspective and using some of the lines from the musical and connecting the story of Joseph's capture and sale with the story of Jesus' betrayal and death.

May I return to the beginning...
and as night falls
we snuggle down for a story
a story of dreams
a story told by a forgotten sister
by Dinah
only girl amongst 12 brothers
children of Jacob
and Rachel and Leah
not forgetting Zilpha and Bilhah
maidservants and mothers.

May I return to the beginning ...
and Dinah tells us a story
of a favourite son
and jealous brothers
of a coat given to Joseph
dyed with saffron and pomegranate
cochineal and mollusc shells
and amazing, technicolour dreamcoat
the brothers' anger flashes red
as Joseph dreams of sheaves of corn
bowing down to him
of twelve stars honouring him.

May I return to the beginning ...
and Dinah tells us a story
of a dream teller bragging and boasting
strutting and preening
in his amazing technicolour dreamcoat
the brothers anger boils over
a coat is ripped and dipped in blood
as Joseph is thrown in a pit
buried and left to die
a coat ripped and dipped in blood
as Joseph is sold to Egyptian traders

sold for pieces of silver
for new clothes and a wild party.

May I return to the beginning ...
and as night falls
Jacob tears his clothes
the dreamer it seems is dead,
silenced,
the dream itself has died
close every door to me
hide all the world from me
and three thousand years on
history repeats itself
a man sold for thirty pieces of silver
a temple curtain torn in two
crimson blood soaking through cloth
this is my body, this is my blood
do this in memory of me.

[share bread and wine]

May I return to the beginning ...
and as night falls
we snuggle down for a story
a story of dreams.
Forgive us when we boast
Forgive us when we have favourites
Forgive us when we are angry
Forgive us when we repeat the mistakes of the past.
Teach us to forgive each other
Teach us to dream of working together
Teach us to share sheaves of corn with the world
Teach us to reach for the stars.

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