

Naming Eucharist

It never ceases to amaze me just how many names is Jesus known by, many of them given before he was even born. For me it is important that we cannot adequately name God. There is something profound and essential that God is always more than we could possibly imagine. Maybe this is why I live Mary Daly's language of Verb of Being, that God is always dynamic and moving and cannot be confined by the limits of human imagination.

This Eucharist could also be called "Epiphany" or "Revelation" as it is through the different ways in which we name God we catch glimpses of the divine. This also draws heavily on a Canadian First Nation understanding of names as dynamic and changing to reflect an individual's character and their role within the community as they journey through life.

God,
I am who I am
God,
I will be who I will be
undefined
yet we yearn
to designate
to define
to know

God or Goddess?
For God is beyond
beyond gender
for God is beyond
beyond language
the great Verb
I am
Being
Life
Living
Loving
I am and I will be

God who is beyond naming
God who has many names
God who is unknowable
God who cannot be known
without the names we give

For names give character and meaning
for names give identity and signify relationship
names vary according to who is using them
names change as we journey through life

And as God is embodied
and takes on human flesh
God is named
and in the act of naming
becomes

a baby
Little One
known as Bump
by his parents
given his first proper name
at the moment of birth
Jesus,
Emmanuel
God with us
a name determined
by an angel's visit
seemingly inappropriate
for a baby
that is no more than a possibility
and yet to quicken
inside his mother's womb
yet he will be
the Son of the Most High
with a list of ancestors
running to fourteen generations
from Sarah and Abraham
to Mary and Joseph

And as Elizabeth
meets Mary
and the baby quickens
and stretches and kicks
Elizabeth adds a new name
Blessed

Shepherds out in the fields
are startled and frightened
as an angel appears in the firelight
and northern lights dance across the sky
to you this day is born
a Saviour

And as astrologers
and philosophers
travel from the East
and seek directions
from a royal palace
they ask where is the child
who is King of the Jews
and Herod quakes in fear
and demands to know
where the Messiah is to be born

And on the eighth day
a devout man called Simeon
appeared at the temple
where Jesus was to be presented

and added titles
of a Light for the Gentles and
Glory to your people Israel
and Anna names him
Redeemer.

Great names
for a little child
causing his parents to flee
known in Egypt merely as
"refugee" another faceless,
nameless family seeking refuge

And now we come
to the moment
of Baptism
and a voice comes from heaven
and names him
Beloved.

And this only the beginning of many names
given to Jesus
Emmanuel
God with us
all trying to express
something of his identity
his relationship
his purpose
his being
Being
I am

As at the last supper
the Teacher and Healer
and Prophet and Priest
becomes the Servant
gathering the people
to the table
becomes the Host
of the Passover
retelling Israel's story
and weaving himself
and the whole of humanity
into a bigger, cosmic picture

"This is my body"
present in the bread of daily life
in the here and now
present throughout creation
in the everywhere and the yet to be
and broken
as the world and humanity are broken

And after the supper
Jesus takes a cup of wine
and shares it with his disciples
"This is my blood poured out for you"
the wine of the new covenant
the new relationship
sealed by my blood
and invites us to be part of the story
"do this in remembrance of me"

[share bread and wine]

We have shared the bread of brokenness
and tasted the wine of new life
for the Crucified One
Is also the Risen One
I am who I am
I will be who I will be
and I choose to become
Emmanuel
God with us

And in turn
God names and calls
each one of us
unique and individual
yet made
in the vibrant image of God
calls each of us
to be who we will be
to become all who we can become

For we too are named
by God
as my Beloved
In whom I am well pleased.

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