

Hosea 14:9 (New Revised Standard Version)

1 Corinthians 3:9b (Good News Bible)

Ephesians 2:10 (Good News Bible)

Sacred Earth, Sacred Word “Sacred Creative Vocation”

The Rev. Lynn P. Lampman

Every week, I write my sermon on a desk made from American Chestnut. Though the American Chestnut was devastated by a fungus from a single Chinese Chestnut brought in by a forester from the Bronx Zoo in 1904, many trees remained standing even after beetles made us of their dead wood as food. So, my gorgeous American Chestnut desk is covered with beautiful wormholes. A creative had hope and vision, and was up for adventure and open to blessing, and thus I use their (mother and son furniture makers) creativity to create every week.

This morning, we continue our series on Creation Spirituality. To date we have looked at the first two paths of creation spirituality: befriending creation with awe and wonder, and befriending darkness by embracing pain and suffering, and letting go. Today, we will look at and explore befriending creativity and our divinity.

Human beings have at their very core the ability to birth new images. We get this ability from the One in whose image we are made. God as creator has given us the ability to create – to give birth to new images and thus creations of beauty, surprise, wonder, justice, gentleness and play can emerge from us.

When we realize that we ourselves are trusted images (God entrusts God’s very image with us), then we can trust and birth new images. We are God’s images, and God trusts us with that divine power of imagination. The human mind is a proper locus for the divine spirit to play in. Could it be that in being

like God we need to create as God needed and still needs to create! We are related to God as a painting is related to a painter, as a clay pot to a potter, as a book to its author. This bespeaks no mildly intimate relationship.

Some of us are at the place of denying our own ability to be creative. And that is a problem, because when we deny the creative gifts within us we wither, our love of life suffers, we become small and cynical or drive ourselves to exhaustion and burnout. We become compulsive workers trying to make up in our world what we have denied in our most creative self.

Therefore, we need to wrestle with creativity today, like Jacob wrestled with the angel. As we wrestle with the creativity each of us and all of us have, we will need to develop the commitment to not go through life looking only in the direction of outside in. Rather we will need to look in the direction of creativity, which comes from the inside and then goes outward, as an emerging into and for the sake of the world.

Birthing requires the refusal to be a victim; and the birthing of new images comes from redirecting our capacities for generativity towards goals that are worthy of our species and are a blessing to this planet. We have seen throughout human history our capacity for both divine and demonic powers of creativity. Experience over the centuries has taught us (though we at times have not heeded its lesson) “when a person is deprived of the power of expression, he or she will express himself or herself in a drive for power.” (Jose Arguelles). We have within us, all of us, the chance to rekindle the spark of hope, vision, adventure and blessing. Both individuals and communities come alive through this rekindling of the divine spark or seed or image in each of us. Painter and poet William Blake lamented one hundred years ago of the ever increasing

violence of industrial society when we said, "Art degraded, Imagination Denied, War Govern'd the Nations."

The fall/redemption spiritual tradition, which seems to dominate much of current Christianity, has ignored creativity as both our birthright and responsibility. The patriarchal tradition has pretty much ignored the implications of God's mothering side and our responsibility to develop the mother in ourselves whether we are women or men, partnered or single, heterosexual or LGBTQ. Mystic Meister Eckhart said, "We are all meant to be mothers of God." and Rabbi Abraham Heschel insists that there is a potential mother in each and every person. Every artist (which means every person made in the image and likeness of God) is called to mother. As psychologist Carl Jung put it, creativity arises "from the realm of the mothers."

A return to the motherly side of God would be a return to compassion as a way of life. It would also be a return to wisdom distinct from mere knowledge or information gathering. For to birth compassion or wisdom is to birth God.

The birthing of our life as a life of beauty and a work of art is a birthing of God in the cosmos. Without creativity, which is our divinity and the expression of the image of God in us, we are sad and live with troubled hearts as individuals and as a people. Only the deepest recovery of our motherhood, one that births God by birthing lives and works of wisdom and compassion, will satisfy.

Our fruitfulness comes from God.

Our very life is the garden where God chooses to live and grow
And we are the building of God where the Divine Architect
desires to show off!

And God created us for a life of good deeds, and the good news is we are already prepared to do so. So, let's just do it – create, birth new images, mother into fullness of life all others, and the planet to which we have been entrusted.