

Living well through Advent

Week Four

Saturday 24 December 2022

Holy Simplicity

Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child!

Holy Infant, so tender and mild,

Joseph Mohr, Silent Night

Jan Kwiatkowski writes: I was a church musician for seventeen years. For several of those years, the choir director and I worked simultaneously at two churches. On Sundays Bill would leave after communion at church A, drive to church B, while I directed the choir anthem, played the final hymn, and then headed to church B. Bill started the service at church B, and I arrived by the first reading, just in time to play the rest of the service. During Christmas and Easter, this arrangement got complicated. One very snowy Christmas Eve, our trips to church B were slower than either of us planned on. We almost hit each other at an intersection. True story.

Bill contacted the priest to let him know we would not be there in time to start the service. The priest had musical ability and was able to lead hymns without instrumental accompaniment. By the time we arrived at church B, hand-held candles illuminated the church and it was time to sing Silent Night. Following the quiet instrumental introduction voices began to sing. Time seemed to stop.

This familiar hymn, recalling images of tenderness, love, pure light, and peace, reminded Bill and me that our earnest Christmas preparations were small compared to the profoundly simple gift of God's perfect love.

Now take some time to consider these questions for your personal reflection:

- ◆ Which lyrics of Silent Night speak to you at this moment?
- ◆ How has your understanding of simplicity evolved since the first Sunday of Advent?
- ◆ If things don't go as planned for you today or tomorrow, how might you remain open to the unexpected ways in which God can still show up?

Silent Night

Silent night, holy night!

All is calm, all is bright.

Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.

Holy infant so tender and mild,

Sleep in heavenly peace,

Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night!

Shepherds quake at the sight.

Glories stream from heaven afar

Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,

Christ the Saviour is born!

Christ the Saviour is born

Silent night, holy night!

Son of God love's pure light.

Radiant beams from Thy holy face

With dawn of redeeming grace,

Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

Jesus Lord, at Thy birth