



Meditation for the First Sunday of Advent November 29, 2020

Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.

[Isaiah 64:8]

There is a fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm entitled “Der Mond” (“The Moon”). It tells the story of four young men from a land where there is no light – no sun during the day, nor moon or stars at night. They travel to another land where they find the moon hanging on a tree. They steal the moon and bring it back to their land, where they charge people money if they want to use the moonlight.

After many years, they grow old and die. As each one dies, one quarter of the moon is cut away and buried with one of its owners until there is once again no more light. In the opera by Carl Orff adapted from this tale, the king “who rules the sky” descends to the dead and retrieves the four pieces of the moon and hangs it in the sky for everyone’s benefit.¹

This fairy tale is, in a way, the story of Advent. Like these four young men, we have been restless seekers in a land of darkness. Through baptism and through the relationships we have formed in our community of faith, we have discovered the light that will transform our lives. When we renew our Baptismal Covenant this weekend we will promise to share that light – not to hoard it, not to require payment for it, not to claim special privileges for it. Like moonlight, the light of God’s grace is intrinsic in the world, waxing and waning through the shadows of the night that mark our path.

Isaiah offers us the prayer that may guide all that we do during this year of transition: *Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.* [Isaiah 64.8] We pray that God will form us to be instruments of light.

We pray for the grace to open our hearts and minds to possibilities for our lives – and our life together – that we have not yet imagined. We pray for the grace to remember that we are here to be *useful* – potters in the time of Isaiah did not make decorative sculptures, but ordinary utensils to be used every day--at the risk of being broken, or chipped, or cracked. We pray for the grace to make sure everyone benefits from the light we have discovered.

Ted Loder, “*I am Silent . . . and Expectant*” [Guerillas of Grace, p. 138]

*How silently,
How silently
 the wondrous gift is given.
I would be silent now,
Lord,
and expectant . . .
 that I may receive
 the gift I need,
 so I may become
 the gift others need.*

¹ This story is told by John E. Colon, [www.episcopalchurch.org/sermons that work/2008](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/sermons%20that%20work/2008)