

Have you ever had a mystical vision? I have not.

Which is not to say that I don't have an imagination

or that I want for a creative spirit,

but I don't believe that any of my thoughts,

however spiritual or creative they might be,

qualify as mystical visions.

But John, the author of the book of Revelation,

seems to have had mystical visions all the time!

And he invites us into his vision.

He wants us to see as he sees,

to look beyond the things that blur and blind our sight

and to see what can be seen only through the eyes of God.

And that's not as outlandish as it sounds.

The scripture always invites, indeed *commands* us to be like God:

to love as God loves; to judge as God judges;

to forgive as God forgives; to see as God sees.

And today John invites us to see, through God's eyes,

"a new heaven and a new earth...

a new holy city coming down out of heaven..."

Seems to me, and I'll bet you'll agree:

this old world of ours could use just this kind of makeover!

In the book of Revelation, John is writing as an exile,

having been banished to the island of Patmos
during a time of persecution of Christians.

His mystical vision is meant as a message of hope for the persecuted.

John is promising that the kingdom of God, the reign of God
will triumph over every human kingdom.

The reign of God will trump every human government and all politics –
and this because the polity God establishes will not be that of the world
for it will never seek its own power or profit or position.

How wary then must we be, we who seek God's kingdom,
lest we mistake the promises of the kingdom of human government
for the promises of the reign of God,
especially when our or any government clothes itself
in the vocabulary of God's kingdom.

As dangerous as it is for religion to become its own militia,
just as dangerous is it for government to posture a religious stance,
arrogantly assumed for self-benefit and profit.

And how dangerous it is for Christians
if we are not able to clearly discern the differences
between the demanding promises of the reign of God
and the seductive promises of human might.

The most *comforting* words in John's mystical vision are these:

“Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race...”

**Yet, for now, God dwells as an exile,
hidden in the hearts of believers and others
whose love of justice and truth marks them as targets
for both religious and political leaders.**

The most *challenging* words in John's vision are these:

"Behold, I make all things new."

**God will not forever tolerate our manipulation
of creation and humankind
but will ultimate change everything such that it will seem
that the old heaven and the old earth have passed away
and been replaced by a new heaven, and a new earth,
where every tear will be gentle wiped
by the very hand of God, dwelling among us.**

**Ours is the task of discerning the kingdoms
that compete to reign over our hearts and minds
and to welcome that reign which is the holy city of God
dwelling among us,
even as God dwells among us at this table today, in the Eucharist.**

(Ending for 5:00 Mass with First Communicants)

**Some of our children will come to this table for the first time today.
May the heavenly food we share with them in this sacrament
make all things new for them and for us
that the reign of God may triumph in their hearts and lives,**

and in ours.

- Rev. Austin Fleming

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(Ending for the 7:30 Mass)

**May the heavenly food we share in this sacrament
make all things new for us**

that the reign of God may triumph in our hearts and lives,
and make of us the holy city of God's presence among his people.

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(Ending for the 9:30 Mass)

This morning we baptize Elliot

**in the reign of God's love already manifest among us
in Christ's body, the Church.**

May the heavenly food we share in this sacrament

make all things new for us and for her,

that the reign of God may triumph in our hearts and lives,

and make of us the holy city of God's presence among his people.

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