

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Spiritual Reflection from the Pastor

January 22, 2023



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

HE COMES, COMES, EVER COMES

“Have you not heard his silent steps? He comes, comes, ever comes. Every moment and every age, every day and every night he comes, comes, ever comes. Many a song have I sung in many a mood of mind, but all their notes have always proclaimed, ‘He comes, comes, ever comes.’ In the fragrant days of sunny April through the forest path he comes, comes, ever comes. In the rainy gloom of July nights on the thundering chariot of clouds he comes, comes, ever comes. In sorrow after sorrow it is his steps that press upon my heart, and it is the golden touch of his feet that makes my joy to shine.”

Reflection: The author of this poem from Gitanjali (“Song-Offering”) is Rabindranath Tagore, a poet, mystic, playwright, artist, philosopher, novelist, composer, from India, who won the Nobel prize for literature in 1913. His Nobel Prize-winning *Gitanjali* explores possibilities and prospects of our personal relationship with God, whom we can recognize in the world, in our works, and through song, music, and art. He is a God who comes, comes, ever comes.

Christmas is a special time when we dwell on the mystery of God’s coming in Jesus. Easter is a time when we celebrate the beauty of Jesus’ immanent as well as transcendent presence in our lives. During the holy seasons of Advent and Lent, and through the Ordinary Time of the liturgical seasons we seek purification and clearer vision of God’s coming into our lives and filling us with every grace and blessing. Even though our vision may get somewhat clouded by our preoccupations and distractions, this mystery has the power to shine through, reminding us of our union with the God who comes throughout the year, every day, and every moment. The reality and mystery of God coming into our lives can lead us into a continuous engagement with a God who comes, rain or shine, in season and out of season.

It is one thing to say that God is present in our lives; quite another to believe that God comes into our lives. The God who comes engages us in a dynamic relationship in our ongoing growth and struggles. In the unfolding of our personhood throughout the life journey, God comes and meets us. As we go about fulfilling our calling and destiny, His encounter is ever fresh and new and relevant to the present moment of our lives because he is a God who comes. The God who comes by engaging us in a process of growth offers a sense of flow to our lives and removes possibilities of our being stagnant and stranded. That God comes in our lives implies that we cannot remain in icy isolation, frozen in our ideas and experiences, constantly looking back to what has been. It does not matter what the past experiences and old notions have been. We have to confront ourselves and the world of today without bias, prejudice, and melancholic nostalgia, taking responsibility for what we can do now to find our happiness and fulfillment and make this world a better place. We have to humanize and spiritualize the world. God invests us with this sacred mission because He is a God who comes.

Since our God is a God who comes, we cannot become complacent to His transforming and healing presence. He will surprise us by popping up in our lives when we least expect Him. We might often discover Him serendipitously. We cannot keep Him out of our lives because He comes, comes, ever comes. As Tagore says, He comes with silent steps. In the midst of the din of our lives, we will do well to develop a special hearing by which we can discern his silent steps. If He came in the past, He comes now. Why are we so preoccupied with His coming in the past that we become deaf to His coming in the present time? Every age, every moment He comes. In our joyful moments, in sad times, and in our various moods He comes. In sunny weather, in rainy season, in the fog, in snowy times, in storms and tornadoes, He comes, comes, ever comes. In our sorrow, it is His steps that press upon our heart and make us breathless with love and peace. In joy, it's His steps that make us shine like fluffy clouds suffused with the sun.

Action: Become aware --- from the moment you wake up in the morning until you fall asleep at the end of the day --- that God comes in your life in various forms and shapes and sizes and colors and sounds and faces and moods and feelings and thoughts. Experiment with this awareness in an intense manner on a given day and evaluate it at the end of the day before you go to bed. Your personal awareness and appreciation of the God who comes is vital for your wellbeing as well as in your quest to help bring about peace, love, and justice to the world.

Your Friend and Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota