

Choose Light

“But nothing less than the most radical imagination will carry us beyond this place, beyond the mere struggle for survival; to the lucid recognition of our possibilities, which will keep us impatient and unresigned to mere survival.” Adrienne Rich

Advent invites us to “be unresigned to mere survival” in the midst of world events: Syrian refugees struggling to find safe places to live, massacres in Beirut and Paris, domestic terrorist killing dozens at Colorado’s Planned Parenthood, or in San Bernardino, CA, and another execution by a Chicago police officer of Laquan McDonald in which a recently released video shows him walking away from the scene. One could be led to despair.

Yet here we are in the season of Advent, a season of hope. Every year we read of Mary’s strength and courage despite the fear she surely felt as a pregnant, unmarried woman in first-century Israel, where women were held in the same regard as slaves. A far cry from the present day Christmas cards scene that too often put her on a pedestal and can lull us into passivity.

Jan Richardson challenges this notion when she writes: “How differently would we approach the world if the story passed down to us had been one that honored Mary as a whole woman whose ‘yes’ came with much more than the ease and joy that we’ve always been taught? A ‘yes’ that, along with being a decision that would revolutionize the world, also carried pain and struggle. When we recognize the humanity in someone who was truly revolutionary, we can relate to them in a way that lifts up our potential to make radical choices that could change the world.”

We have witnessed some of these radical choices being made that offer us hope:

- On Black Friday, November 27, protestors from different movements of people of color and their allies nonviolently closed down streets and stores on Chicago’s Magnificent Mile – the shopping mecca of the city – in response of Laquan McDonald murder and repercussions.
- While many governors publicly refuse to accept Syrian refugees, the Sisters of Providence chose to reject Indiana’s Governor Pence’s demand and publicly offered space at their Motherhouse.
- While climate change protestors were banned in Paris using the state of emergency as a reason, climate change activists created a human chain; shoes were left in the streets for those who would have walked to promote protection of the climate. Even Pope Francis sent his shoes for to be in solidarity.

In each of these cases, people refused to live in isolation and fear. They came together to address the very systems, the power and principalities of our day, creating this atmosphere of fear and despair. Let us take Adrienne Rich urgings to heart and ask “how will our radical imagination help us to recognize our own possibilities that will keep us impatient and unresigned to mere survival?”

Here are a few such possibilities to keep us informed and hopefully “impatient” -

www.blacklivesmatter.com

Challenging police violence against black youth.

www.crossroadsantiracism.org Training to end racism.

www.csgu.org Coalition to Stop Gun Violence

www.cair.com Council on American-Islamic Relations

www.afsc.org Promotion of nonviolent actions regarding Paris and Beirut

www.catholicclimatemovement.global Protection of the earth

www.democracynow.org in depth reporting of current events

Often there are actions recommended that you can take. Anything you do that challenges the current climate of fear and isolation will change the world!