

## The Wonder Of It All - LOVE

When we gather for worship we often enjoy Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Song, as the Scripture says, hear the words of this song as an introduction to my homily:

There's the wonder of sunset at evening,  
The wonder as sunrise I see;  
But the wonder of wonders that thrills my soul  
Is the wonder that God loves me.

### Refrain

O, the wonder of it all! The wonder of it all!  
Just to think that God loves me.  
O, the wonder of it all! The wonder of it all!  
Just to think that God loves me.

### Verse 2

There's the wonder of springtime and harvest,  
The sky, the stars, the sun;  
But the wonder of wonders that thrills my soul  
Is a wonder that's only begun.

## GENESIS

The wonder of it all probably begins with the first book in our Bibles - Genesis Chapter 1 - "In the beginning God created heaven and earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep water. The Spirit of God was hovering over the water."

- While Genesis is the first book in our Bibles it began as an **oral tradition** and became **written tradition** as late as the 4th century BCE. 4 or 5 hundred years before the time of Jesus.
- The wonder of this chapter alone is the **consistent correlation it has with scientific tables**, like the Geological Timetable, about the origin and evolution of our world.

At the close of the 7 days of creations we are told in verse 31 "And God saw everything that was made and it was very good."

## PSALMS

19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky displays what God's hands have made."

139:11-12 "If I say, "Let the darkness hide me and let the light around me turn into night, even the darkness is not too dark for you. Night is as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you."

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN also talks about "In The Beginning".....

This is the last Gospel **written around 100 years after the CE**, about 70 or 80 years after the death of Jesus. I love this Gospel because it demonstrates the love of God in Word and Deed. **This Gospel, like most of scripture, is destroyed when anyone reads it literally and not allegorically or metaphorically.** It presents us with stories about the life of Jesus as he announces the Kingdom of God in word and action to tell us about God.

**It is a book about God's love for the whole of Creation, the universe and our world.** If there is one verse in the Bible that is well known and popular it is John 3:16. It proclaimed the Good News about **God who loves all, everywhere, in all times and places.**

As the Gospel of John begins, we are introduced again to the wonder of "In The Beginning". God spoke, and actions resulted, by which everything evolved and continues to expand and grow.

**John established his metaphor for the Realm, or Kingdom, of God with these words:**

### **English:**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

### **Spanish:**

En el principio era ya el Verbo, y el Verbo estaba con Dios, y el Verbo era Dios. El estaba en el principio con Dios.

### **Spanish translation:**

In the principle (or the beginning) it was already the Verb, and the Verb was with God.

It was in the principle (or beginning) with God.

When I first read the Spanish version of this opening of John's Gospel, I was struck by an **interesting correlation** to another biblical passage when God spoke to **Moses in the burning bush**. Moses asked God whom he should say sent him, and God said to Moses, *"I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'*

**It is simple and yet so profound that the "principle" of this Universe is the active verb - I AM!**

**The Creator is both the NOUN and VERB that brought it all about.**

**The early Christians were called the "followers of the way" as they saw and learned about God's will for living through Jesus the Christ, the anointed one.**

So the author of John's Gospel continued the metaphor with an introduction to One who would be a particularly remarkable person, (verse 14) ***"The Word became human and lived actively among us.... full of kindness and truth."*** (verse 16-18) ***"Each of us has received one gift after another because of all that the Word is. The Teachings were given through Moses, but kindness and truth came into existence through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. God's only Son, the one who is closest to the God's heart, has made him known."***

**Oh The Wonder of It All - Just to Think That God Loves everything and Each One of Us!**

**From the beginning of John's Gospel it is clear that the important role of Jesus, the Christ (the anointed one) was to Make God Known!**

The drama of this announcement comes from John the Baptist himself: **32, "I saw the Spirit come down as a dove from heaven and stay on him. 33 I didn't know who he was. But God, who sent me to baptize with water, had told me, 'When you see the Spirit come down and stay on someone, you'll know that person is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'** **34 I have seen this and have declared that this is the Son of God."**

From that day forward in this Gospel we are to realize that the **words** that Jesus said and the **signs** that he did are to help us to be better informed about God, the creator and sustainer of our world.

**We might also reflect on our own beginning in baptism whereby we become Followers of the Way, by early Christians, "raised to a new life of grace" and "sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own for ever."**

**At baptism we are introduced to our world and welcomed by the Celebrant and the People of God when we say these words, "We receive you into the household of God, Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood."**

Thus we begin a new life of love and grace to continue as, **followers of the way**, as Jesus demonstrated by word and deed, showing us what this gift of God's Presence enables us to do.

- **The words of scripture tell us** *"Whoever is a believer in Christ is a new creation. The old way of living has disappeared. A new way of living has come into existence."* (2 Corinthians 5:17) LOVE
- *"God wanted his people throughout the world to know the glorious riches of this mystery—which is Christ living in you, giving you the hope of glory".* (Colossians 1:27) LOVE
- Jesus asks us to: *"Love each other as I have loved you. This is what I'm commanding you to do."* (John 15:12) LOVE
- We are asked to be humble servants, as Jesus says, *"But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves."* (Luke 15:12)) LOVE
- Jesus even tells us: *"I can guarantee this truth: Those who believe in me will do the things that I am doing. They will do even greater things because I am going to the Father".* (John 14:12) LOVE

**Jesus has called us too**, like the Disciples whom John tells us about who were called, to follow Jesus. **Never did Jesus ask anyone to worship him, but he continually called people to follow him.**

**Oh The Wonder of It All** - Just to Think how much God Loves Each One of Us!

The mystery of **God's love for us** is probably **best described** in the Gospel of John when Jesus has a **conversation with Nicodemus**, a Pharisee and member of the Jewish Council, whom we are told, came to Jesus by night. This story is perhaps one of the most famous in all of Christian Scripture because of these verses, (John 3:16-17) *"God loved the world so much that God gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him (or **be loves him as Marcus Borg translates believe**) will not die but will have eternal life<sup>17</sup>. God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but to save the world."*

**While there are so many interpretations and views of this portion of John's Gospel, the most important point is that it is primarily about God, and not about Jesus.**

- It tells me that God is not exclusive at all when it comes to our universe and our world and that **God's love and grace is for All people, in All places, and in All time.**
- Like Nicodemus, we **cannot comprehend** that **God**, our Creator, **loves the whole universe** and every living creature without reservations or conditions. As we are told in the first story of Creation in Genesis chapter 1:31 *"And God saw everything that was made and it was very good"*.
- Jesus was also trying to help Nicodemus understand that **God was Spirit** and not easy to comprehend any more than the wind, which we can hear and feel but we cannot see, to which **Nicodemus replies, "how can this be?"**
- May I simply respond to these dilemmas by repeating the **answer that Jesus gave** him, *"That's the way it is with everyone born of the Spirit." "Flesh and blood give birth to flesh and blood, but the Spirit gives birth to things that are spiritual. Don't be surprised when I tell you that all of you must be born from above."*

**How might we translate this in the language and experience of our time?**

- We acknowledge that **no one can see a physical being called God** nor can we take a **photo**. We are learning that, "*God is a spirit. Those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth.*" (John 4:24)
- We are coming to appreciate the unity of the Noun and the Verb as we too **construct a more complete Sentence of living in that Spirit by Faith and Actions.**
- We have learned a lot about our universe and how it came to be, but we still have many more mysteries to contemplate. Today Particle Physicists are concerned about the **Higgs Boson, what some have referred to as "the God Factor"**.

*Scientists say they are almost certain they have proven the existence of the Higgs boson -- a never-before-seen subatomic particle long thought to be a fundamental building block of the universe. Experts say finding the elusive particle would rank as one of the top scientific achievements of the past 50 years. Scientists believe that the Higgs boson is the particle that gives all matter its mass. [mass - formed of separate units gathered into a mass or whole -(how it is held together)].*

An **interesting statement** in the first chapter of **Colossians** tells us:

***16 God created all things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Whether they are kings or lords, rulers or powers—everything has been created through God and for God.***

***17 God existed before everything and holds everything together.***

**What is the wonder of it all that holds our universe, everything, including us together? Allow me to close with the words from another song:**

1. The love of God is greater far  
Than tongue or pen can ever tell.  
It goes beyond the highest star  
And reaches to the lowest hell.

O love of God, how rich and pure!  
How measureless and strong!  
It shall forevermore endure  
The saints' and angels' song.

As living Saints today, let us present this "song" of God's love by what we do and say making a complete sentence by the way we live and love each other.

AMEN!