

Sisters and Brothers, Happy New Year!

01/03/2021

### Covenant Life

- One of the Community's foundational pillars is our passion for God's Word. Not just reading it but studying and living it...being doers of the Word! It is with this in mind that I suggest that we each recommit this year to something that draws us deeper into His Word. There are many responses, if you do not have a particular one, I would like to suggest Fr. Mike Schmitz's podcast entitled [The Bible in a Year](#). I have never used the podcast app on my phone, but I clicked it and entered his name in the search, and it came up (might have to enter the title also). It is built on Jeff Cavin's bible timeline, runs for about 20 min with about 10 minutes of scripture and 10 minutes of commentary. More information is [here](#).
- The audio from our December Community Gathering is [here](#) and the transcript is [here](#).
- Your ongoing financial support is sincerely appreciated. Please donate online [here](#) or mail your donations to P.O. Box 225008 Dallas, Tx 75222

**Reflection** - As we start 2021, I would first like to thank the many members of the Community who have served us throughout a particularly challenging 2020. Thanks to the coordinators who have participated in weekly calls and especially the Area Pastoral Coordinators who organized the Area Zoom calls, Tom Fedor serving on the Website, Gretchen Montgomery serving with transcripts, Facebook and at the school, Charlie Dorsey caring for the MSM facility, Sue Wagner who serves in countless ways, and for all the nameless rest who served in hidden ways. Thank you! I am proud of the way that we, as a people, have continued to be there for one another, despite a global pandemic, to live our Covenant.

In the same way that I wanted a few weeks ago to claim the reading of Isaiah 61 as prophetic, today I want to claim Isaiah 60 as prophetic (especially the first three verses): *"Arise! Shine, for your light has come, the glory of the LORD has dawned upon you. Though darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds, the peoples, Upon you the LORD will dawn, and over you his glory will be seen. Nations shall walk by your light, kings by the radiance of your dawning."*

Despite the darkness of 2020 (and it does seem like "*darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds, the peoples*") this prophetic scripture call us to *Arise! To shine, for our light has come, the glory of the LORD has dawned upon us...as He has!* This is what we celebrate each Christmas and, through the baptism of His Holy Spirit, are empowered to live anew each day. He is our center, the source of our power. It is in letting go and letting Him animate our days that *nations shall walk by our light.*

The message of the Epiphany is a message of Jesus being the savior of the whole world, all peoples. That the God of the universe so loved us that He took on our nature in His Son, Jesus, and showed us the way to the Father.

Three quick points: To experience the Incarnation...God with us...Emmanuel, requires faith...*confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.* God is ever present and ever reaching out, but we must set aside time to be with Him, time for His Word, to listen, to reflect, and enable Him to *be present.* We must do so with faith and confidence, surrendering and trusting Him unconditionally. If we do this, we will not only meet Him in our daily prayer times, but we will experience Him in the Church, in those we encounter each day and in our experience with His creation.

Next, after our encounter, we must respond, we must *Arise!* Our encounter demands a response. We are to 'Rise and Shine' as we sing. God needs us to shine for Him for *our light has come and the glory of the LORD has dawned upon us!* God within us is light for the world. We are His letter. It is our life's work to not just be holy and get ourselves into heaven but to *witness holiness and bring as many people as we possibly can with us!*

Finally, a point of affirmation. I shared earlier how humbled and blessed I was to hear Fr. Ed Dougherty tell the story of his success in building TV stations and networks in Latin America and as he shared he kept going back to his roots and thanking our Community for giving him his start. This came to mind when I read the words "*Nations shall walk by your light, kings by the radiance of your dawning.*" God's has worked through us to shine His light on many nations and I

firmly believe that God is not finish with us yet. I believe the future is bright and if we continue to surrender to Him, arise, and be that particular people that He called...that He will continue to shine His light through us and nations (new people through new means) will see His light.

Let us pray together *"Heavenly Father, today I turn from my inward focus and choose You, I choose to Arise and Shine for You. Despite the darkness and thick clouds that covers the earth I have faith that You will dawn and Your glory will be seen. I say Yes to surrendering to You, to seeking You daily, to witnessing for You in everything I do and say so that I can lead as many as possible home to You. I know I can only do this through Your Holy Spirit. Come Lord Jesus. Amen."*

God bless,

David