

Lent #1

2-21-2021

J.V. Trautwein

Vicar Karen Pugatch

Celebrate (Introduction)

“On Ash Wednesday the church began its journey toward baptismal immersion in the death and resurrection of Christ. This year, the Sundays in Lent lead us to focus on five covenants God makes in the Hebrew Scriptures and to use them as lenses through which to view baptism. First Peter connects the way God saved Noah’s family in the flood with the way God saves us through the water of baptism. The baptismal covenant is made with us individually, but the new life we are given in baptism is for the sake of the whole world.”

We come together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Opening Hymn: [“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”](#)

Psalm: Psalm 25:1-10

“To thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

² O my God, in thee I trust,
let me not be put to shame;
let not my enemies exult over me.

³ Yea, let none that wait for thee be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

⁴ Make me to know thy ways, O Lord;
teach me thy paths.

⁵ Lead me in thy truth, and teach me,
for thou art the God of my salvation;
for thee I wait all the day long.

⁶ Be mindful of thy mercy, O Lord, and of thy steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.

⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth, or my transgressions;
according to thy steadfast love remember me,
for thy goodness’ sake, O Lord!

⁸ Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

⁹ He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.

¹⁰ All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.”

Hymn of Praise: [“Praise and Thanksgiving Be To God”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“Holy God, Heavenly Father, in the waters of the flood you saved the chosen, and in the wilderness of temptation you protected your Son from sin. Renew us in the gift of baptism. May your holy angels be with us, that the wicked foe may have no power over us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.”

1st Reading: [Genesis 9:8-17](#)

2nd Reading: [1 Peter 3:18-22](#)

The Gospel: [Mark 1:9-15](#)

Hymn of the Day: [“When Jesus Came to Jordan”](#)

The Message: [\(Video Link\)](#)

Life can be filled with surprises. Many surprises come out of the blue leading you never to know what is going to come next. These surprises may come from the most unlikely situations and persons. They may even come from a person who has been living a life of relative obscurity or at least on the fringes of what would be called main stream. Currently we have an example of such a person who within the past few weeks has been propelled from obscurity to national prominence..

Born in Los Angeles in `1198 and raised by a single mother, a school teacher, she struggled with a childhood speech impediment. After extensive therapy she was able to overcome her audio processing disorder. In 2017 she became the first Youth Poet Laureate of the United States and performed at the Library of Congress. She then received a scholarship to Harvard as a sociology major graduating Cum Laude and a member of Phi Beta Kappa last year. She was recognized by Jill Biden at her performance at the Library of Congress and thus began her overnight stardom. Amanda Gorman became the youngest poet to perform at a presidential inauguration. Following President Biden’s speech, she incorporated in her poem these words of hope which will resonate throughout history:

“We’ve seen a force that would shatter our nation rather than share it,
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy.
And this effort very nearly succeeded.
But while democracy can be periodically delayed,
It can never be permanently defeated.
In this truth, in this faith, we trust.
For while we have our eyes on the future,
History has its eyes on us.”

Her immediate fame was reflected in that she performed at the opening ceremony of the following Super Bowl. Amanda Gorman's books are now on the New York Times; best sellers list and now will become a person of fame of her generation.

Although the rise overnight from obscurity into prominence may not occur every day, it does happen every so often. We have seen it in the sport world, entertainment, politics, the financial world, and in the world literature. Some would say that over-night notoriety is the result of pure luck, while others may say it is being at the right place at the right time with the right people present. There may be some truth to this but just may not be the whole story. It could very well be that the individual may have something to say about it. He or she may have spent years in preparing for the right moment to make their move. By design, or even calculation, there just may be that right moment when preparation meets the reality of fulfillment. This may be the result of sheer determination and even the willingness to step forward. It is then that the special gift, contribution, or talent is made public to accept or reject. Also this moment can become a reality by what many would call divine intervention which is mainly applied when the rise out of obscurity comes when no good reason can be applied. But probably the truth of the matter is that all of the above may be involved.

It is interesting to take note that it seems as though such an over-night lift out of obscurity was the case with Jesus. At least this seems to be since there was no record of His life from the time of Luke's account of Him being in the temple at the age of twelve until His baptism by John. Many believe that at this time He was around 29 years old. We know that He lived in Nazareth and was a carpenter, following in the footsteps of His father Joseph. He was certainly not a person who had risen above others and certainly had not gain any kind of notoriety outside of being a carpenter among a village of common folk. He could have excelled in His trade but that is speculation at best. We know that He was not married, at least there is no indication that He was. This would have made Him even less likely to suddenly become notorious since to not be married was beneath any idea of the norm and even respectability.

Jesus during those first twenty-nine years of life lived a very obscure life. Did people look upon Him as someone who would suddenly become a well-known person in Israel? Was He a person who would be looked upon as a threat to the Jewish establishment? I doubt it very much. In their wildest imagination did they picture Jesus changing the course of history? Would they have ever considered Him to be that Messiah, the very Son of God? They would never have predicted that people would be talking about him some two thousand years later. The only one who would have even the slightest clue as to any of this would have been Mary and perhaps to some degree Joseph, Elizabeth, and Zechariah. Others may have taken note about how blameless and righteous he lived His life. But that in itself may have indicated to them that He was a devout Jew and held in some respect for this. It did not place Him as the Son of God, the Messiah but a man of God.

So here we have this Jesus an obscure twenty-nine year old who was perhaps at the prime of His career. What suddenly propelled Him into sudden prominence? Why did he all of a sudden at this point in time suddenly make His move? Was He getting bored in His trade or

were the people of this small town talking about his being a bachelor getting to Him? Did He now recognize that it was the time to fulfill that which He knew was His mission here on earth? His elevation out of obscurity was definitely not a lucky happenstance. No God's preparation had now been finished. Everything was in place.

John the Baptist had effectively done His mission in preparing the people for Jesus. He had gained fame through a large following of people. He had laid the foundation with His message of repentance and the act of baptism. His message was that he was preparing the people for the Kingdom of God which was at hand. With this preparation being accomplished, it was now time for Jesus to step forward and to complete the work of John with the fulfillment of the good news.

Jesus not only needed John to prepare the people for Him but also to introduce Him to the people, after all he was just an obscure carpenter from Nazareth. He needed the endorsement of this itinerant preacher who had such a great following. So Jesus went to John as he was baptizing in the river Jordan. Jesus had come to be baptized not as a cleansing of sins but in recognition that man needs to have a life of repentance and forgiveness. Matthew states that John, recognizing Jesus as the fulfillment of his preparation, argued with Jesus stating that John needed to be baptized by Jesus. But Jesus responded "Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Jesus was saying that Baptism was more than an act of cleansing but the actual sign and commitment to living that righteous life as a child of God. This was the transforming act of Baptism and was validated by God's confirmation. "And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased.'"

The time and the place of Jesus coming out of obscurity was not left to chance but a carefully designed plan in order to take the next step towards fulfilling the purpose of the Incarnation. It was time to bring the good news of God's revelations of love, forgiveness, and eternal life to all of mankind. Coming out of obscurity would now publicly begin Jesus' road to the cross and the resurrection. He would almost over-night begin to be that miracle worker and teacher which would bring thousands of people to Him. Obscurity would no longer be an option but the revelation of God's love would be His total purpose. Coming out of obscurity by Jesus would become the biggest surprise ever perpetrated upon mankind.

This is the first Sunday in Lent and now we too will be entering Jesus' life as He journeys to the Cross and the empty tomb. It is a time in which we must recommit to our Baptism which directs us to follow this path out of obscurity into a life of witnessing to this good news of God's love. We must follow the footsteps of Jesus in order that we may not only know God's grace for us but to live and share it. No longer can we yield to the temptation to hide this witness by hiding it but we must let it shine forth with the radiance and joy of the knowledge of the Resurrection to come. That is our journey during this season of Lent.

Anthem: ["Wade in the Water" - The Fisk Jubilee Singers](#)

Offering*: ([On-Line Giving Link](#))

We give thee but thine own, what e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer

Father of all creation, with so many suffering from the ravages of winter, we pray that they find comfort and relief. With the longer daylight we know that is the sign that the new life of spring is on its way. Open our minds to realize that the disasters caused by winter will soon give way to the warmth of the coming season. Give us the endurance and patience so we may be able to celebrate the change of the seasons. During this time of Lent, guide us in our preparation for the new life as found in the resurrection. Prepare us to place in perspective the challenges of life and the good news we celebrate on Easter..

.We continue to be thankful that the number of people being infected by the Coronavirus is dwindling. Help us to be patient and strong in our will to completely overcome this dreaded virus. We also need patience in our wait to receive the vaccine which will help end the suffering which we have been experiencing. Continue to give the medical community the wisdom and strength to care for those who have been overcome by this life threatening virus.

We pray for all whole need your comforting and healing presence especially Bob and Pat Allen, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Cronin family, the Elshafei family, Betty Fultz, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Donna Mayhew, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, David Otto, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Linda Rigby, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Linda Stephens, Della Mae Strobel, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Linda Williamson, Wyatt Lee Wolf, Vicki and Christian Zanartu, and Pastor Jack.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make His face shine upon you;

The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters

Live on knowing God's love,

The joy of living this life of love,

And the peace which only comes through the power of His presence within you.

So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["Word of God, Come Down on Earth"](#)

We are discontinuing in person worship services on Sundays until further notice. The online worship experiences will continue as well as the Midweek Thought.

*Offering to be sent to:

Bob Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church
9122 Sybert Drive
Columbia Hills
Ellicott City, MD 21043
<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the offering designation or here: https://tithely.com/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291.