

Scripture for August 3, 2008

Reflection from John Surette, SJ

Cosmic Feast – Abundance

In our first reading this morning from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah we heard the following words:

“All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, receive grain and eat; come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk!”

In this reading the generosity of God is shown in the offer of abundant water, grain, wine, and milk. God is almost prodigal in the Divine generosity. All are invited to come to the feast and to eat and drink to their satisfaction.

In our reading from the Gospel of Matthew we are presented with another feast at which “five thousand men not counting women and children” were fed. All were invited to sit down and to eat to their satisfaction. The people did exactly as invited. The feast involved such an abundance that twelve baskets of food fragments were left over.

These two readings about feasting suggest to me some thoughts about another feast. It is the cosmic feast that is God’s Universe, God’s Creation.



This feast has been going on for fourteen billion years. The galaxies are at the feast, all hundreds of billion of them, each containing some hundred million stars. They bring all that they can be to the celebration and place it on the banquet table. Our Sun is there with its nine

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planets and thousands of asteroids. It brings its fullness to the feast and places it on the banquet table.

Earth's surface rocks are there, from the oldest known in Western Greenland to the youngest pushing up along the continental rifts on the ocean floor. They bring their uniqueness to the celebration and place it on the banquet table. All of Earth's life-forms are also at the feast. Millions of species are there. They bring their diversity and beauty to the celebration and make it available to all.

The cosmic feast is a celebratory event. It is an exultation of existence. The banquet table is set with many lovely things. Such abundance! Such generosity on the part of God's Universe!

We humans didn't set the table but we belong at it. All of us belong. All are welcomed. No distinctions of class, race, ethnicity, or religion at this feast. All are invited to eat and drink to their satisfaction. All are invited to take what they need from the galaxies, the Sun, the rocks, and all the other life-forms. While avoiding the pervasive sin of over-consumption, all are invited to take nourishment for their lives, for their souls. Everything and everyone is food for us. Everything and everyone is gift and grace for us. How blessed we are!

One more important thing needs to be said. At this cosmic feast we humans are also invited to be food, to be gift and grace, for the Universe and its Earth. We are called to bring our life substance and our life energy to the banquet. All the other creatures have a right to nourish themselves from our lives, our fullness, our imaginations, our love, and our creativity.

We are among the many lovely things on the banquet table! We are invited to be nourishing food and tasty morsels at God's cosmic feast!