

## **Advent 3: Stealing Beauty**

‘The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me to bring good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and release for prisoners...’ (IS 61: 1, 2)

‘When life is firm, we need to sense its firmness; when it has no foundation, we need to know this too...The necessary condition for the fulfillment of Advent is the renunciation of presumptuous attitudes and alluring dreams in which we build our own imaginary worlds.’ Fr. Alfred Delp

Historically, our common enemy has done a masterful job of demonizing persons with gender and sexual problems, especially homosexuality, so much so that now we compensate for the damage done by refusing to admit a problem exists at all.

Thinking ourselves just, we actually are robbing men and women of the choice for healing the core issues that underlie disordered desire. Satan has changed his tactics and now captivates the Church with a weak, uninspired approach to sexual brokenness. Jesus no longer heals the brokenhearted; He confirms it as destiny.

For the Church of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, being ‘born again’ of the Spirit is apparently no match for being ‘born that way.’

We risk losing the power of Incarnational Reality: the truth that the God who became man invites us to partake of His divine nature. At our most recent Living Waters Training, team member Bonnie West made this connection for us. Because God lived a real human life in reliance upon a mother and father and had to progress (as we all must) up the developmental ladder in order to become a whole person, He is able to help us at every point in our own development. That means we can welcome the One who can free us from what has frustrated our maturity. He liberates us to become who and what the Father intends for us.

All time is present to Jesus, so He is not hindered by when the darkness fell; because He is God, He is not hindered by the depth or magnitude of that darkness. His divine power, working incisively in love, is able to meet us at whatever point we stopped becoming the man or woman of God’s design. His gentle, almighty Spirit embraces adult/children-in-distress and coaxes us to resume the journey.

This Advent, St. Paul implores us 'to not quench the Spirit' (1Thes. 5:19) while John the Baptist insists we 'make straight the way of the Lord' who comes to baptism us in His Spirit (JN 1: 19-28). Skilled caregivers, moving sensitively according to Jesus' Spirit, can impart a depth of healing to the sexually broken in a manner that can only be attributed to Jesus the Healer.

We defy the power of His Spirit, and of the Incarnation itself, by vaunting the complexities of our sinful conditions over His healing hand. In so doing, we dehumanize the most vulnerable and leech the light from our Redeemer. We steal beauty from both creature and Creator; we unwittingly cooperate with a common enemy who came 'to steal and kill and destroy.' Jesus came to bind up the brokenhearted, to release poor captives, 'that they may have life, and have it to the full.' (JN 10:10)