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THE DAWN: AN IMAGE OF PEACE

By Sister Christine Hilliard, CSJ

A Quote

"The nearer the dawn, the darker the night."

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW



Silhouette of Trees
Photo by James Wheeler

Reflection

With the current world events and their effects on our immediate communities as well as the day-to-day reports of violence and abuse, I wonder if we might seem to be in a darkness, a night that has forgotten to move into day, into light. Perhaps the question is: if dawn does come, how can it be recognized these days? I offer an old Hassidic tale for consideration.

A rabbi asked his students, “How can we determine the hour of dawn, when the night ends and the day begins?”

One of his students suggested, “When from a distance you can distinguish between a dog and a sheep?”

“No,” was the answer from the rabbi.

“Is it when a person can distinguish between a fig tree and a grape vine?” asked a second student.

“No,” the rabbi said.

“Please tell us the answer, then” said the students.

“It is,” said the wise teacher, “when you can look into the face of human beings and you have enough light in you to recognize them as your sisters

and brothers. Up until then it is night and darkness is still with us.”

This is the view where we are told that the movement from the night to the day, from the darkness to the light, has something to do with our individual and collective actions. If I feel engulfed in the night, a way to hasten the dawn is in the recognition that I am sister/brother to all human beings, to all of creation. I alone cannot transform the darkness into light, but my efforts to recognize and welcome light (and to be light) figure into God’s movement of salvation. It is how peace, the dawn, embraces the world.

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