

“Come home with me and be my guests.” (The Message)

Lydia believes Paul and his message of the Good News in Christ and opens her heart and home. Her whole household is baptized and she looks at Paul and Timothy and wonders where they are staying. How does a heart open and find trust enough to invite a stranger to come and live with them? What we can say here, is that beside the waters in Philippi, where many were baptized, something happened. The power of the Holy Spirit inspires—fills with the breath of God-- Lydia, a God-fearing Gentile, (which means she may have known a lot about Judaism), uses her money and position to welcome Paul. As an entrepreneur who made sought after purple textiles, Lydia also had many contacts throughout the region. The Way of Christ began to spread more throughout the Roman world.

The question I reflect on as we hear this story and Jesus' promise of peace in our turbulent time is-- how can we know this peace? How can this peace bring an invitation of hospitality and reminder of God's promise of abundance? Peace, as Jesus used the word when he greeted the disciples, means shalom—well-being, wholeness and abundance—a peace that only God can give. Peace here is not lack of conflict but the inner knowledge of God with us always in all things and in all times.

Because a loveless world,” said Jesus, “is a sightless world. If anyone loves me, they will carefully keep my word and my Father will love them—we'll move right into the neighborhood! Not loving me means not keeping my words. The message you are hearing isn't mine. It's the message of the Father who sent me. “I'm telling you these things while I'm still living with you. The Friend, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send at my request, will make everything plain to you. He will remind you of all the things I have told you. I'm leaving you well and whole. That's my parting gift to you. Peace. I don't leave you the way you're used to being left—feeling abandoned, bereft. So don't be upset. Don't be distraught. The Message John 14:23-27

The Gift of the Holy Spirit, Jesus promises, makes a difference when we turn toward the Love or the Light—we are not alone. Will we ask poets and storytellers to help us to walk the Way?

### The Peace of Wild Things

by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Sonnet, Trinity 18

by Madeleine L'Engle

Peace is the centre of the atom, the core  
Of quiet within the storm. It is not  
A cessation, a nothingness, more  
The lightning in reverse is what  
Reveals the light. It is the law that binds  
The atom's structure, ordering the dance  
Of proton and electron, and that finds  
Within the midst of flame and wind, the glance  
In the still eye of the vast hurricane.  
Peace is not placidity; peace is  
The power to endure the megatron of pain  
With joy, the silent thunder of release,  
The ordering of Love. Peace is the atom's start,  
The primal image: God within the heart.

Invitation

Oh do you have time  
to linger  
for just a little while  
out of your busy  
and very important day  
for the goldfinches  
that have gathered  
in a field of thistles  
for a musical battle,  
to see who can sing  
the highest note,  
or the lowest,  
or the most expressive of mirth,  
or the most tender?  
Their strong, blunt beaks  
drink the air  
as they strive  
melodiously  
not for your sake  
and not for mine  
and not for the sake of winning  
but for sheer delight and gratitude –  
believe us, they say,  
it is a serious thing  
just to be alive  
on this fresh morning  
in the broken world.

I beg of you,  
do not walk by  
without pausing  
to attend to this  
rather ridiculous performance.  
It could mean something.  
It could mean everything.  
It could be what Rilke meant, when he  
wrote:  
*You must change your life.*

By Mary Oliver

*Black Hole in the Milky Way... and now we  
see...what we have not seen...*

