

**Sermons at Trinity
3 Advent 2008**

“The thinning of the cervix between us”

The Rev. R. Cameron Miller

Shhhh....

**The cervix of the rational world is growing thin,
and making way for our birth into the mystical
dimension of the cosmos.**

**Now I know some of you will get scared
or creeped out when I talk like that,
but I just can't help it**

when standing in this a double-exposure

of two worlds

that are always present to each other

at one and the same time...

as if watercolors bleeding into one another

yet never fully joined.

Yes, the evil Beast of War

still snorts and heaves as loud as ever,

its hot breath dripping from enraged nostrils.

But also,

there are some wolves that decided

to curled up with the lambs,

and not with mint jelly on the side,

but for a furry-woolly snuggle.

It is always like that,

both/and...

beasts of war *and* wolves and lambs.

Even as those among us

in this community

suffer the haunt of grief,

the lamentation of fractured relationships,

the anxiety of illness,

or the sudden threat of more limited income...

***at the same time* the breath of God**

sings like a solo oboe

**laughing on the wind for others;
even still the song of God
has brought healing to someone with cancer,
peace to another with mental torment,
and rest to yet another who had been racked with pain.**

Shhhh...

**Don't say it out loud,
because the rational world –
stretched like a latex glove over our brain –
will not *believe it*,
does not wish to *see it*,
will go to great lengths to live in *denial of it*.
So let's not stir up our rationalism just now,**

***let it lie* like the skinny old dog it is.**

But with our imaginations,

with our intuition,

with our emotions,

with our other five senses,

we will see, touch, feel, even taste and smell,

we will *know*!

What we will *know*

is the thin veil between God and Creation –

stretched thinner than a cervix primed to 10.

A veil so thin it almost isn't there;

so sheer it really doesn't appear.

A veil between God and Creation that

**allows movement “between”;
a semi-permeable membrane that
gives shape without structure.**

**This double-exposure of *believable* and *unbelievable*
is *sometimes* especially intense;
sometimes especially confounding
even though it makes the air thick with knowing...
the same way negative ions stroke the skin
before a thunderstorm.**

Shhh.

**The Third Sunday of Advent
is that kind of moment...
can you *feel* it?**

The Third Sunday of Advent

is stretched so tightly across the next eleven days

that we can almost see little faces looking back at us

from the other side;

little noses and lips smooshed up against the invisible

but opaque pane of days...

and they have happy little voices

of a newborn Christmas Day.

Now...

there is also that skinny old dog

sleeping in the corner

content to rest there between meals and attention.

The practical,

rational,

thoughtful mind

**travels down a well-worn
rutted road
following the tracks of oxen,
horses,
and wagons wheels that came before.
It doesn't wander from the track.**

**It is the prove-it-to-me voice
within our head
and it ticks down the list of things to do
before Christmas arrives;
grumbling about commercialism
and keeping an eye on "Weather Reports"
that bark about cholera and war;
and feeling generally hassled**

**by whether or not we can get it all done;
or if the dark corners of evil
will disappear just because Christmas is here.**

And still,

**there is the *other voice*
quietly humming from within the chamber
of our hardened hearts.**

Still,

**there is that cooing
whisper-of-song
that bids us to look again
at the winter landscape
and see if we can't *perceive*
a sign of Spring hidden there.**

It is always like that,

both/and...

two voices

with just one

true

strand of attention.

We have to choose which one

gets most of our attention.

As Christmas draws us closer and closer

with its strange magnetic power,

the *Unbelievable* is poking through

the thinning veil between God and Creation;

it is poking through

and tickling our resistance;

poking through

and drawing the attention of our

**cynical, hassled, rational inclination
to just get through it all.**

**As much as we insist on the intellectually credible
we also *yearn***

for a lifting of the veil on the mystical.

It is always like that,

both/and...resisting and yearning.

All this worship stuff we do each Sunday

is only an attempt

to say something intelligent

about the *Unbelievable* holiness

that moves like smoke through history,

and sings its song

in the ear of our otherwise routine

and unremarkable lives.

All our Bible readings with their antique images;

all our hymns – jolly or morose;

all our poignant stories and poems;

the overly formulaic prayers;

the predictable rhythms of the Communion...

all of it,

is just our way of *stuttering*.

If,

in all this stuff we do,

we think we are going to discover a big “Truth,”

or uncover some tidy summary of God

to unwrap yearly in a digestible formula,

we are mistaken.

All of this thing we do,

on Christmas

or any given Sunday,

is a highly articulate *stammering*.

As the veil between God and Creation thins,

just like a cervix in preparation for delivery,

we suddenly realize that our most eloquent

statements of faith crumble into nards of nothingness.

That is the beauty of such *thin moments*

as the one we are in.

So what do you do with a thin moment like this?

You watch.

You listen.

You wonder.

**Now that old dog in the corner,
our insistent rationalism,
will bark...
will guard the entrance...
will growl at anything threatening it.**

**So in a thin moment,
don't wake the dog.**

Let it lie.

Watch,

listen,

wonder.

**In other words,
don't analyze the story.**

Don't try to figure out the moment.

Don't apply logic to a thin moment.

Don't dissect and evaluate it until it's gone.

Watch.

Listen.

Wonder.

In other words,

experience it...

feel it...

enjoy it.

Later you can wake up the dog

and give it a bone

but in the thin moment

watch, listen and wonder.

So that's just a little advice for the season

we are in – cause sometimes we forget.

Watch.

Listen.

Wonder.

We have entered a thin moment

and the cervix is tapering the border

between God and us

and strange things are afoot.

Watch. Listen. Wonder...and enjoy. Amen.