

Reflection/Homily for Oct. 5, 2017
Death Anniversary of M. Clara Pfaender
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Readings: Eph. 3:16-21;
Letter of M. Clara;
Jn. 12:35-35, 15:12

Greetings of Peace and Goodness my Sisters and Brothers!

We have just listened to two scripture readings that M. Clara Pfaender had also heard and lived into while she breathed physically on Earth:

- 1) Paul, in his Letter to the Ephesians, prays for his community, as Clara prayed for her community that “through Christ (we would all) live in our hearts and be planted in Love.”
- 2) And in the Gospel from the Community of John we hear both M. Clara and ourselves being urged to: “Walk in the light of now so that the dark will not overtake you.”

Both of these spiritual-wisdom teachings influenced what we heard read in the letter of M. Clara.

There is another holy lesson that, it seems to me, deeply influenced M. Clara’s way of life, until and into her death. It is the stanza of The Canticle of the Creatures that St. Francis of Assisi had his brothers add to his Song while he lay dying in the Portiucula:

Most Good God, to you belong praise, glory, honor and all blessing!

....

Praise be yours, My Good God, through Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no one living can escape.

Blessed are those, whom death will find living your holy will,
for the second death shall do them no harm.

We gather here this afternoon to re-member and celebrate “the second death” of M. Clara Pfaender....

through which she was breathed back into the fullness of our Good God.

We celebrate that she was found living God’s Holy Will,
in her heart and among all her relationships,
as a tree planted in love,
as one walking in the light of each NOW,
and as a woman of Heart!

I sense that M. Clara had a spiritual practice, all through her life on Mother Earth:
A practice of seeing with the wisdom of her heart that each incident:

each encounter with another,
each event,
no matter how awful or awful,
was a teacher for her.

She must have practiced asking herself,
with each blessing and each blow,
with each dying to her way or each inspiration,
with each threat to one of her dreams of serving others,
with each rejection
by her sisters, the clergy, the Vatican,
local folks, other Religious Communities
of her dreams, hopes and calling and
with each dying experience:

“What is the lesson that I am to harvest from this?”

“What is this “little death” teaching me, inviting me to live forth faithfully as God’s Holy Will?”

In preparing this reflection I spent a couple of hours skimming through her biography: Light into The Darkness and jotting down some of her “NOW THIS DEATH, TOO” experiences. I then imagined how each one might have been a teacher for her.....

Then I heard her call me:

“Allow all experiences of your life, Georgene, to teach you about letting go, of forgiving so that you, too, can give forth God’s Goodness to others.”

Perhaps on this Death Anniversary that we celebrate here and NOW, M. Clara is inviting each of us to review not only her life and deaths but our own death experiences of living.

Can we allow each past experience to be a teacher of “letting go” so as to live in the now experience and breathe forth love into the future?

And thus M. Clara walked forward in the gospel light of NOW,
so that the dark would not overtake her.

And thus M. Clara grew as a faithful practioner of letting go of the constancy of little deaths,
no matter how inspired they seemed to be to her,
so that she would be planted as a tree, in Christ,
for the sake of the building of the Kin-dom of God.

And thus M. Clara’s “second death”, that we remember today, had no power to destroy her, for it was finally the freedom of breathing into the fullness of our Good God.