

Traveling Companion: And the Word was made Flesh...

Fr. Michael Tracey

I know a woman of few words. Some of her friends describe her this way. "She will never use two words when one is enough."

We suffer from word pollution. We multiply words, hoping to remind people of our wisdom, our intellectual prowess, our command of a language, our sophistication, our superiority.

Many of the words we use are used as pauses while we attempt to think of more important things to say. Many times, our "you know," is a telltale reminder of such a practice. It becomes a pause that nauseates rather than refreshes. Some people let their lives do the talking. They are like a river, flowing easily, noiseless but filled with depth of character and commitment.

No one glories in an incessant talker. Often they talk so that they don't have to listen to their own inner hunger, pain and emptiness. At times, their idle chatter is a plea for acceptance. They are afraid to go within where, in the silence, they might discover real acceptance.

Yet, our God is so different. In the story of Creation, His most important word was "Let." That simple three-letter word generated a revolution. He simply said, over and over again, "Let there be.... and so it happened." Truly, a God of few words, but great actions. I even think that "Let" might be the third most important word in the Bible; the first being, "love."

Recently, I was reading a book by John Kirvan called "Silent Hope." He begins the first chapter by saying that "In the beginning there is a hunger for God. Then in time there comes the realization that the God for whom we hunger is unknowable, that the God escapes our every attempt to confine him to the limits of our mind and soul. This God is accessible only to raw faith. But there is still another discovery to come. The God for whom we hunger, the God in whom we believe is a silent God and there is no escape from her silence. There is only hope."

I began to think that God's silence might be one of his best gifts. Silence challenges us to embrace a world where words are inadequate and often unnecessary. Yes, words fail us when we really enter into silence.

I have always been enriched by Isaiah 55:10-11 where God says that the purpose of the rain is to water the earth, making it fertile and fruitful. "So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it." Yes, God never wastes words.

As our thoughts turn toward Christmas, many words will be said and written in cards. Often they are words that should have been said during the year but busyness crept in and a dose of guilt compels us to say them now. So often, the words camouflage the emptiness and loneliness of the season as we try to put a "happy" on our public face while, inside the silence is deafening.

Anthony deMello, said of John's Prologue, 1:1-5, "Look steadily at the darkness. It won't be long before you see the light. Gaze at things. It won't be long before you see the Word.

Oh! Yes! Did you remember that I said there were three most important words of God? And God said, Let us send our love, wrapped in a "Word."