

Toetrede

Liturgie van die Lig

Aansteek van die kerse

Lied 358

Welkom, o stille nag van vrede,
onder die suiderkruis,
wyl stemme uit die ou verlede
oor sterreheemel ruis.

Refrein

*Kersfees kom, Kersfees kom –
gee aan God die eer.
Skenk ons 'n helder Somerkersfees
in hierdie land, o Heer.*

Hoor jy hoe sag die klokke beier
In eeue-oue taal.
Kyk, selfs die nagtelike swye
vertel die ou verhaal.

Voel jy ook nou sy warm liefde
As ons die dag gedenk,
Toe Hy sy Seun aan ons gegee het –
Ons grootste kersgeskenk.
*Christus kom, Christus kom –
gee aan God die eer.
Skenk ons 'n helder Somerkersfees
in hierdie land, o Heer.*

Woorddiens

Tema: Drie of vier geskenke vir Kersfees?

Skriflesing: Filippense 4:4-7 (1953)

⁴ Verbly julle altyd in die Here; ek herhaal: Verbly julle!

⁵ Laat julle vriendelikheid aan alle mense bekend word. Die Here is naby.

⁶ Wees oor niks besorg nie, maar laat julle begeertes in alles deur gebed en smeking met danksegging bekend word by God.

⁷ En die vrede van God, wat alle verstand te bowe gaan, sal julle harte en julle sinne bewaar in Christus Jesus.

Broodjies vir die pad

Verbly/Blydschap

“He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has.”

— Epictetus

“When you do things from your soul, you feel a river moving in you, a joy.”

— Rumi

“Some of you say, “Joy is greater than sorrow,” and others say, “Nay, sorrow is the greater.”

But I say unto you, they are inseparable.

Together they come, and when one sits alone with you at your board, remember that the other is asleep upon your bed.”

— Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet

“I am one of the searchers. There are, I believe, millions of us. We are not unhappy, but neither are we really content. We continue to explore life, hoping to uncover its ultimate secret. We continue to explore ourselves, hoping to understand. We like to walk along the beach, we are drawn by the ocean, taken by its power, its unceasing motion, its mystery and unspeakable beauty. We like forests and mountains, deserts and hidden rivers, and the lonely cities as well. Our sadness is as much a part of our lives as is our laughter. To share our sadness with one we love is perhaps as great a joy as we can know - unless it be to share our laughter.

We searchers are ambitious only for life itself, for everything beautiful it can provide. Most of all we love and want to be loved. We want to live in a relationship that will not impede our wandering, nor prevent our search, nor lock us in prison walls; that will take us for what little we have to give. We do not want to prove ourselves to another or compete for love.

For wanderers, dreamers, and lovers, for lonely men and women who dare to ask of life everything good and beautiful. It is for those who are too gentle to live among wolves.”

— James Kavanaugh, There Are Men Too Gentle to Live Among Wolves

“Do not ask your children

to strive for extraordinary lives.

Such striving may seem admirable,

but it is the way of foolishness.

Help them instead to find the wonder

and the marvel of an ordinary life.

Show them the joy of tasting

tomatoes, apples and pears.

Show them how to cry

when pets and people die.

Show them the infinite pleasure

in the touch of a hand.

And make the ordinary come alive for them.

The extraordinary will take care of itself.”

— William Martin, The Parent's Tao Te Ching: Ancient Advice for Modern Parents

Minsaamheid/Vriendelikheid

“We are made for goodness. We are made for love. We are made for friendliness. We are made for togetherness. We are made for all of the beautiful things that you and I know. We are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders. All are welcome: black, white, red, yellow, rich, poor, educated, not educated, male, female, gay, straight, all, all, all. We all belong to this family, this human family, God's family.”

— Archbishop Desmond Tutu

“All true friendliness begins with fire and food and drink and the recognition of rain or frost. ...Each human soul has in a sense to enact for itself the gigantic humility of the Incarnation. Every man must descend into the flesh to meet mankind.”

— G.K. Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World*

Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936) was born in London, educated at St. Paul's, and went to art school at University College London. In 1900, he was asked to contribute a few magazine articles on art criticism, and went on to become one of the most prolific writers of all time. He wrote a hundred books, contributions to 200 more, hundreds of poems, including the epic *Ballad of the White Horse*, five plays, five novels, and some two hundred short stories, including a popular series featuring the priest-detective, *Father Brown*. In spite of his literary accomplishments, he considered himself primarily a journalist. He wrote over 4000 newspaper essays, including 30 years worth of weekly columns for the *Illustrated London News*, and 13 years of weekly columns for the *Daily News*. He also edited his own newspaper, *G.K.'s Weekly*. Chesterton was equally at ease with literary and social criticism, history, politics, economics, philosophy, and theology.

“Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are rain upon the blinding dust of earth, overlying our hard hearts. I was better after I had cried, than before--more sorry, more aware of my own ingratitude, more gentle.”

— Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

Vrede

“Have courage for the great sorrows of life and patience for the small ones; and when you have laboriously accomplished your daily task, go to sleep in peace. God is awake.”

— Victor Hugo

“Jesus Christ lived in the midst of his enemies. At the end all his disciples deserted him. On the Cross he was utterly alone, surrounded by evildoers and mockers. For this cause he had come, to bring peace to the enemies of God. So the Christian, too, belongs not in the seclusion of a cloistered life but in the thick of foes. There is his commission, his work. 'The kingdom is to be in the midst of your enemies. And he who will not suffer this does not want to be of the Kingdom of Christ; he wants to be among friends, to sit among roses and lilies, not with the bad people but the devout people. O you blasphemers and betrayers of Christ! If Christ had done what you are doing who would ever have been spared' (Luther).”

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community*

Brood vir die pad

Advent vra nie dat ons die donkerte, werklikheid versag

RRV

“We are living in dark times.” Met hierdie woorde begin Homi Bhabha – een van die leidende stemme in postkoloniale teorie – sy lesing vroeër die week in Stellenbosch by 'n konferensie oor die verbandhoudende temas van herkenning, herstel en versoening.

Die gehoor lag. Die rede vir die gelag hang daarmee saam dat die krag enkele oomblikke vantevore afgegaan het en die saal in donker gehul is.

Maar dit word gou duidelik dat sy openingswoorde oor donker tye ook dieper sny as bloot 'n verwysing na 'n kragonderbreking: Ons leef in 'n tyd waarin haatspraak, geweld en 'n verlies aan medemenslikheid toenemend genormaliseer word.

In die kerklike jaar word tans Advent gevier, met 'n fokus op die gereedmaking vir die koms van Christus. In haar boek *Advent: The Once and Future Coming of Jesus Christ* merk die Amerikaanse Episkopale priester en skrywer Fleming Rutledge op dat Advent in die donkerte begin.

Ons verskraal die betekenis van Advent, meen sy, as ons nie bereid is om vreesloos 'n inventaris van die donkerte te neem nie. In aansluiting by hierdie gedagte verwys sy ook na W.H. Auden se woorde: “Unless you exclaim – ‘There must be some mistake’ – you must be mistaken.”

Advent is weliswaar 'n tyd van hoopvolle verwagting, maar dit is nie 'n hoop wat met sentimentaliteit, nostalgie of blote optimisme verwar moet word nie. Die betekenis van Advent vra nie dat ons die werklikheid versag of die donkerte – ook die donkerte in onself – ontken nie.

In die profetiese loflied van Sagaria, die pa van Johannes die Doper, lees ons dat Johannes sal heenwys na die een wat soos die môreson sal opgaan “om lig te bring aan dié wat in duisternis en in die skadu van die dood lewe, om ons voetstappte rig op die pad van vrede” (Lukas 1:79).

Advent gaan dus ook daarvoor om deur die donkerte te sien omdat ons vashou aan die belofte van die koms van lig. En om ons lewens in die lig van dié lig te rig, onder meer deur die herkenning van mekaar se menslikheid en die protes teen onreg.

I Beg to Differ: Ministry amid the Teargas, die outobiografie van Peter Storey, die Metodiste-predikant, teoloog en kerkstryder teen apartheid, het onlangs verskyn.

Die titel is ontleen aan woorde van die Indiese Jesuïte-teoloog Samuel Rayan, woorde wat ook gepas vir Advent is: *A candle-light is a protest at midnight / It is a non-conformist / It says to the darkness / 'I beg to differ.'* –

<https://www.netwerk24.com/Stemme/Sielsgoed/advent-vra-nie-dat-ons-die-donkerte-werklikheid-versag-20181207>

Lied 526

Waar daar liefde is, en deernis,
waar daar liefde is, daar is God die Heer.

*Ubi caritas, et amor
ubi caritas, Deus ibi est.*