



***Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast!
March 8, 2020, The 2nd Sunday in Lent***

Not a Sermon . . .

John 3:1-17: In today's Gospel Nicodemus, a devout and learned leader in Judaism, visits Jesus – at night so as not to be seen by the public. He shows himself to be so steeped in traditional ways of thinking about God that he rejects Jesus's teaching about how to enter the Kingdom of God.

Many people, even those who are not Christians, are familiar with the verse John 3:16. Most often we hear it used in evangelism. So, I'm including a reflection I found this week which broadens the scope of the John 3:16 message to include all of creation. I suspect this reflection has been challenging to many, but then, anything new usually is...like Jesus's teachings were to Nicodemus. - *With blessings, Vance.*

"For God So Loved the Cosmos" by Matthew Laney, March 5, 2020.

"[John 3:16-17] For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

Despite their non-judgy, non-condemny tone, have you ever heard these verses used as a pretext for scaring people into salvation/heaven? If so, here are three things that might help:

1. These verses are not angling toward heaven, hell, or purgatory. "Eternal life" in John's gospel isn't never-ending existence after bodily death. "Eternal life" is about abundant life here and now.
2. For John, Jesus is the door into eternal-life-right-now, also known as "salvation."
3. These verses are not about people, at least not exclusively so. Jesus does not say, "For God so loved human beings that God gave..." Jesus says, "God so loved the cosmos" ("world" is "kosmos" in Greek). That includes flora, fauna and fungi; earth, wind and fire; rocks and clouds; protons, electrons, neutrons and quarks; blackholes, nebulae and dark matter. God loves all of it because all of it is God's love.

One might argue these verses are reserved for beings capable of believing. But who's to say only humans believe and worship? The Bible doesn't say that. According to Scripture, all of nature (which includes every cell of your body) praises and worships God.

The cosmos is not separate from you or outside of you. You are it. You are God's love. That's what Jesus came to reveal, then and now.

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This Week Prayers for . . .

- Mary's soul and comfort for her husband Joe and her family. Mary died this week after an extended battle with disease.
- Jim's soul and his family. Jim passed away last week.
- healing and comfort for Debbie (out-of-state friend) and her husband John.