



**WITNESS
FOR JUSTICE**

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O Holy New Year

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As we move into another new year, I find myself with an ear worm of lyrics from O Holy Night, hearing it more as a modern-day folk song for the whole year, rather than a Christmas carol.

“Long lay the world, in sin and error pining....”

We are again and still in a world with power-hungry leaders who both ignore and intentionally desecrate the sacredness of humanity. Warmongering, lies, and cruelty are their playbook. Yes, the world is full of sin. We also acknowledge there are ways, both small and large, in which we err through complicity with unjust systems. And we are pining for justice.

“Till He appeared, and the soul felt its worth.”

I love this part: “The soul felt its worth.” Every time I hear those words-- every single time-- I wonder at all the ways the world would be different if every soul truly felt their worth, knowing that for that to be true, we must truly and deeply believe no one soul is worth any more or less than any other. Imagine with me: every soul feeling our true worth.

We witness glimpses of this when folks create community by refusing to give into fear. Behold folks refusing to let ICE take their neighbors and building underground networks of care for trans and nonbinary siblings and youth, reproductive justice, food justice, mental health needs, neurodivergent beloveds. Behold the kingdom that will not—cannot—be



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destroyed.

“A thrill of hope...”

Every time I hear stories about resistance and resilience, I am simultaneously hopeful and humbled, as well as fatigued and frustrated at the ways systemic racism and oppression by governmental powers meticulously remove support for communities in need. The communities Jesus created and wanted for us are ones where we care for one another lovingly and communally, in spite of what empire tries to make us believe.

“A weary word rejoices...”

During this past year, the awareness that joy is an act of resistance has seeped more deeply into my bones. Even when we are weary beyond weary, finding pockets of joy is life-giving. This is not embracing joy to ignore pain, but rather embodying a joy that does not come from this white cis-heteronormative capitalistic patriarchal colonial world. When we find that internal joy that is not dependent on an external world, the kind of joy that makes no sense, we must rejoice. We need every ounce of that for ourselves and each other in our weary world.

“And yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.”

A new year is here. As we cross the threshold into all that may be, we hold together all the weariness of the year that is passing, as well as all the hope for what we might build together. May we be clear-eyed about how we show up, listen to our bodies and souls about when and how they need rest, connect with each other in tiny and substantial ways, and intentionally rejoice whenever we can.

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