

4th Sunday of Advent • A
December 23, 2007 • Christ the King

Be still and know that I am God! With these words, the author of the forty-sixth psalm invites us to come aside for a moment from the hundreds of every day, things both big and small, which otherwise filled our days and nights. Hasn't this been the invitation of Advent?

"Be still and know that I am God . . ." It is the eve before Christmas eve. There are only a few more shopping hours left until Christmas. But there is nothing as important right now than to come aside and to consider the mystery of God's presence, Emmanuel. God is with us! The season of Advent readies us for his coming; Christmas is a time to celebrate his appearance in time and space, in flesh and blood. God is with us! This reality has forever changed the way we perceive ourselves and God. The incarnation is not simply an invitation to accept God in faith and to welcome him into our lives; it is *the* ultimatum. God is with us! What are we going to do about it? How will that fact shape the way I live? The words I say? The thoughts I think? The decisions I make?

Be still and know that I am God! They gave him the name Jesus, a name that defined his reason for existing, a name which means God saves. God is with us! The one who saves has become a part of our existence. Without him there is no meaning to our life; we are still and we know that we have a place at the crib, the cross and always the table. He is with us and we are with Him!

But, we are blessed with an incredible and frightening freedom. We aren't forced to be still; we need not know; we don't have to believe! We can say NO to our "God of Absolute closeness."*
And yet God is with us!

Be still and know that I am God! Today's scripture readings invite us beyond our terrifying capacity to offer a NO to God's presence. We are invited to see God anew in Jesus. God is with us! Promised by the prophet, prepared for by the hopeful, his presence is the good news for all the peoples of the earth. In him, the God of absolute closeness has begun to tell a saving story; it is our story. In his birth, promise meets fulfillment. In every aspect of his life, from the

crib to the cross to the table, the love of God is revealed and we are welcomed.

Be still and know that I am God! . . . He is with us! He is the gift that never ends, the nearness which never leaves, the sacred food which never ceases to nourish, the song which never ends.

Be still and know that I am God! Be still and know.... Be still!

(Karl Rahner, Everyday Faith, Herder and Herder, New York: 1968)
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