1st Advent, Year A, November 27, 2016

Isaiah 2:1-5

Psalm 122

Romans 13: 11-14

Matthew 24: 37-44

Are you ready for the noise?

The noise of commercials. The noise of shopping. The noise of Christmas songs- yes, Christmas songs, not to quiet the soul and ease the mind but to pulsate to purchase and beat us into submission that we have to get that certain gift. “O, Holy Night” not to contemplate but to push anxiety to count the number of nights left to the great reveal of Christmas morn not to celebrate love but to weigh whether we bought the right gift for the right person.

What is the antacid to the acid of noise in the world? The noise of orgies and drunkenness, promiscuity and lust, rivalry and jealousy. The noise of swords and spears. The noise of working in the field or grinding at the mill. The noise that is so distracting that we miss the raindrops that signal the great flood.

What is the antacid to the world of noise? Silence.

Oh, no! Not silence! That means we have to stop what we are doing; sit in a corner; and contemplate our navels! Not at all. If our souls are settled in silence; if our hearts are in the hands of our God; if our heads can meditate on what lies beyond this world; if our eyes can see beyond the glare of the tinseled world, we can be at peace no matter what we do or whom we are with or what the world throws at us. Silence is the calm in the midst of the storm. Silence is the peace that settles us down in the midst of the war of the worlds. Silence is the quarter note rest in the age of electronic music. Silence is the breath between the rhymes of the hip-hop rap.

Catherine Ingram writes:

It is strange how much we resist the inherent peace and quiet that is always possible. Perhaps this is because resting in simple presence is so foreign to a lifelong habit of mental complication, and we may have confused complication with aliveness. We may assume that having no particular mental project would result in boredom. Or we may be overwhelmed by how vast and free life suddenly feels when our minds are not on the hunt.

Catherine Ingram from “Passionate Presence”

Soren Keirkegaard:

The present state of the world and the whole of life is diseased. If I would be a doctor and my advice asked, I should reply, “Create silence. Bring people to silence. The word of God cannot be heard in the noisy world of today. Therefore, create silence.”

Soren Keirkegaard.

The prophet says:

In the days to come, the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established as the highest mountain and raised above the hills. All nations shall steam toward it; many peoples will come and say: “Come, let us climb the Lord’s mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may instruct us in this ways, and we may walk in his paths.” For from Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the lord from Jerusalem.

Saith Isaiah

And what if the instruction of the Lord to us is to cherish silence? What if the word of the Lord to us is to be silent? What if the heavens are not the choirs and choirs of angels but the space between where we can look into the eyes of our God without saying a word and rest quietly in the palm of his hands?

Are not these first two Sundays of Advent pointing us to that coming of the Lord at the end of time, at the end of the noise, at the advent of the quiet kiss of our God?

Why not let it be now?