



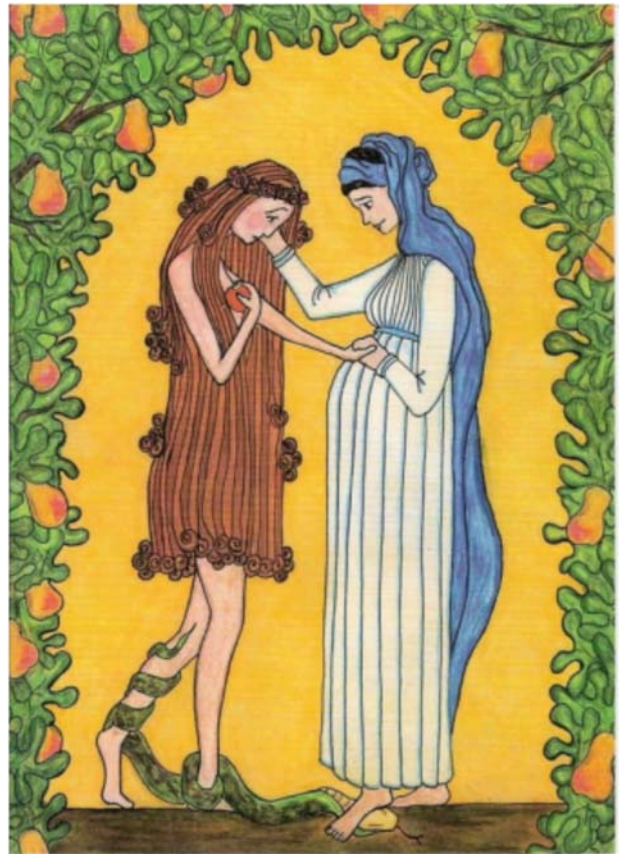
As Far As The Curse Is Found

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The past week or so I've been reflecting on Genesis, chapter 3. Admittedly, this is probably not your typical Advent passage. I was taken there after seeing this beautiful image: a crayon and pencil piece of artwork by Sister Grace Remington of the Mississippi Abbey entitled "Virgin Mary Consoles Eve". I'm grateful that Walt Mueller of the Center for Parent and Youth Understanding (www.cpyu.org) brought this to my attention last week. It's a beautiful yet simplistic piece of art that so beautifully reminds me of Jesus' life, death and resurrection and our reason for hope!

Genesis 3 is where we find the fall, where Adam and Eve are deceived by the serpent and sin enters into God's perfect creation and wreaks havoc. There are far reaching implications because of the fall. We are cursed and even creation is cursed (read Genesis 3:14-19). Humanity is separated from God the Father, from one another and even from nature. Things are broken and unlike they were before sin entered into the human experience.

We are cursed. We're reminded of this daily.



Death – the message I received this morning informing me that a dear friend's father had passed away unexpectedly last night. It isn't supposed to be this way.

News – each new day brings more reports of death, destruction and brokenness that is beyond imagination. Today I awoke to the unfolding events in Aleppo, horrified by the thought of children being massacred and exposed to the horrors of war. It isn't supposed to be this way.

Health and Illness – a visit to the doctor can conclude with a diagnosis that uses words like cancer, dementia, heart disease, diabetes, inoperable or terminal. It isn't supposed to be this way.

Our Bodies – daily I'm reminded by the aches and pains and occasional limitations that my body is aging and doesn't always do what it used to be able to do. It isn't supposed to be this way.

Our Relationships – We don't get along with others. Dysfunctional family systems, abusive relationships, poor communication, betrayal, abandonment and broken relationships wreak havoc on our lives. It isn't supposed to be this way.

This little picture (notice the feet) has reminded me of the hope found in Genesis 3:15 when God cursed the serpent:

“And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

God reminds us, even in the midst of the curse, it isn't always going to be this way. Jesus came into our world to do what we cannot do for ourselves. He won the victory over sin and death. He has defeated the devil's schemes and will crush him once and for all! The victory has been won and we long and yearn for the day when Jesus returns to make all things new!

I need to be reminded of this today. I need to be reminded of this often. Our world needs to hear the hope we have in Christ.

In reflecting on this passage over the past week or so, I came to appreciate the third verse of Joy to the World in a fresh way.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

We are cursed, but not abandoned or forgotten or without hope! Because of Jesus, it won't always be this way. We look forward to the day when He will make all things new and the curse will be no more.

Christ's Peace,

Lance

Midwest Region Conference Seeks New Regional Director

The Midwest Region Conference has begun the search for their next Regional Director. Applications are due on or before December 31, 2016. Follow these links to find the [Job Description](#) and [Application Form](#). Be prepared to include your current resume including your church membership, ministerial credentials, education, employment history and three references with contact information. All packets will be considered in full confidence.

All materials should be sent electronically to Pastor Scott Bons, MRC President and Search Committee Chairman at scottbons6504@yahoo.com. For questions or for more information you can also call Pastor Scott at (217) 820-3999.