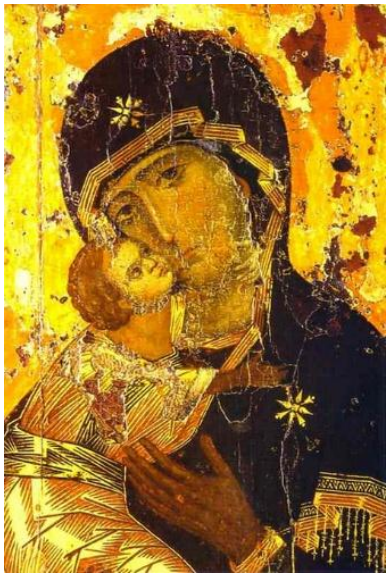
***Dayspring* Quiet Day** (September 2026)



A Hungry Love

This last while I have once again been disturbed by the hate, the distress and the violence which seems to dominate our world. The thing that constantly worries me is how ineffective love seems to be as a counter to that hate and violence. But reading Rowan Williams' *Ponder These Things: Praying with icons of the Virgin*, I was struck by the comments he made about the Russian icon, Our Lady of Vladimir. The icon shows the Christ child embracing his mother, Mary, and gazing lovingly at her. Mary does not meet Jesus' gaze, but instead gazes outwards at us, the viewer of the icon, with sad eyes, almost as though she feels smothered and somewhat ashamed of the child's passionate embrace. Williams comments that the Christ child shows us that,

> *God is not ashamed to be our God, to be identified as the one who is involved with us here, though, it is as if he is not merely unashamed but positively* ***shameless*** *in his eagerness, longing to embrace and be embraced. It is not simply that God will deign not to mind our company, rather he is passionate for it. The image of God's action we are presented with here is of a hungry love*.

It is here I find an antidote to the narrative of hate and violence in the world. There is, as it were, a counter to the violence in the passionate, shameless, eager love of God, which clings to us in all our faltering and frail humanity. It is God's hungry love. As you gaze upon the icon of Our Lady of Vladimir, may you also be aware of God's passionate, embracing and hungry love for you, and for all our fractured and faltering world.

Brian Holliday

***Introduction**: The following readings are from the Lectionary for Sunday 6th September, the fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost. The readings are about the love of God, and our call to be lovers of God in response.*

Some suggestions for reflection:

Read through the passages slowly.
Is there a word or image that strikes you?
Sit with that word or image and listen to what it is saying to you.
Do you hear God's voice to you?
Let it deepen within.
What is God calling you to?

Or

Sit with these passages and reflect on one or more questions below. Let it deepen in your heart as you listen to the Spirit speaking to you. You may like to draw, or walk, or journal as a way of listening to God.

Questions for reflection on the different passages:

- **Read Psalm 149.**

This psalm is a call to lovers of God to respond to God in songs and dance.
The enemies mentioned in the psalm can be things within us which stop us loving God.
Is there a word or phrase which stands out to you?
Turn it into a breath prayer, a short phrase which captures your desire.
Personalise it with your name.
Sit with it and let it deepen.
Walk the labyrinth and listen to what is God saying to you.
Draw a picture, or find a token, to express what has touched you.

- **Read the Matthew 18 passage.**

As you read this passage from Matthew's Gospel, hear the hungry love of God for the childlike believer, for the one lost sheep, and for the two or three gathered together.
What is your response to God's hungry love?
Do you feel like Mary?
Or a childlike believer?
Or the lost sheep?
Do you have a metaphor which speaks to you of your response to the hungry love of God?
Sit with that metaphor, and write about your inner feelings.
Listen for God's response to you.
Is there a deep desire you can turn into a breath prayer to carry with you?
Stay with what you feel and let it deepen within.
Draw a picture, or find a token, to express your metaphor and God's hungry love..

- **Read the Romans 13 passage.**

In response to God's love, we are to love others. This fulfils all God's law.
Sometimes we can feel smothered by the requirements of living as a Christian.
Where do you feel you fall short? Write out a list to God.
What is it that most disturbs you?
Spend time with the icon of Our Lady of Vladimir.
Do you feel for Mary?
Turn you cry for help into a short breath prayer.
Carry it with you as you walk or wait on God to reply.
What is God saying to you about your request?
Do you need to clarify or shift the focus of your request?
Let it deepen, then journal about your request with God.
Draw a picture, or find token, to remind you of your cry for help from God.

Psalm 149 (The Message)

Hallelujah!
Sing to God a brand-new song,
  praise him in the company of all who love him.
Let all Israel celebrate their Sovereign Creator,
  Zion's children exult in their King.
Let them praise his name in dance;
  strike up the band and make great music!
And why? Because God delights in his people,
  adorns plain folk with salvation garlands!

Let true lovers break out in praise,
  sing out from wherever they're sitting,
Shout the high praises of God,
  brandish their swords in the wild sword-dance—
A portent of vengeance on the God-defying nations,
  a signal that punishment's coming,
Their kings chained and hauled off to jail,
  their leaders behind bars for good,
The judgment on them carried out to the letter
  —and all who love God in the seat of honour!
Hallelujah!

Matthew 18:10-20 (The Message)

“Watch that you don’t treat a single one of these childlike believers arrogantly. You realize, don’t you, that their personal angels are constantly in touch with my Father in heaven?

Work It Out Between You

“Look at it this way. If someone has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders off, doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine and go after the one? And if he finds it, doesn’t he make far more over it than over the ninety-nine who stay put? Your Father in heaven feels the same way. He doesn’t want to lose even one of these simple believers.

“If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you’ve made a friend. If he won’t listen, take one or two others along so that the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If he still won’t listen, tell the church. If he won’t listen to the church, you’ll have to start over from scratch, confront him with the need for repentance, and offer again God’s forgiving love.

“Take this most seriously: A yes on earth is yes in heaven; a no on earth is no in heaven. What you say to one another is eternal. I mean this. When two of you get together on anything at all on earth and make a prayer of it, my Father in heaven goes into action. And when two or three of you are together because of me, you can be sure that I’ll be there.”

Romans 13:1-10 (The Message)

Be a good citizen. All governments are under God. Insofar as there is peace and order, it's God's order. So live responsibly as a citizen. If you're irresponsible to the state, then you're irresponsible with God, and God will hold you responsible. Duly constituted authorities are only a threat if you're trying to get by with something. Decent citizens should have nothing to fear.

Do you want to be on good terms with the government? Be a responsible citizen and you'll get on just fine, the government working to your advantage. But if you're breaking the rules right and left, watch out. The police aren't there just to be admired in their uniforms. God also has an interest in keeping order, and he uses them to do it. That's why you must live responsibly—not just to avoid punishment but also because it's the right way to live.

That's also why you pay taxes—so that an orderly way of life can be maintained. Fulfill your obligations as a citizen. Pay your taxes, pay your bills, respect your leaders.

* * *

Don't run up debts, except for the huge debt of love you owe each other. When you love others, you complete what the law has been after all along. The law code—don't sleep with another person's spouse, don't take someone's life, don't take what isn't yours, don't always be wanting what you don't have, and any other "don't" you can think of—finally adds up to this: Love other people as well as you do yourself. You can't go wrong when you love others. When you add up everything in the law code, the sum total is *love*.

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