

Hello, friends. Welcome to Wednesday Coffee with Cultivating Sanctuary. This is a time when we equip you to be well amid life's persistent disruptions. Today, December 21st is the winter solstice here in the Northern Hemisphere. It is the longest night of the year.

I used to be really bummed out by that. I used to want to rush to the days when daylight was lengthening because, I don't know, maybe I thought that's where the hope was. Now, I really savor this time of year and this day as holy. It's quiet, it's cocooning. It's a really beautiful place for reflection and growth.

My coffee mug this week was a gift decades ago from my dear friend, Kirsten. It always brings me comfort and joy. I love the vividness of the night sky.

So I wanna do something a little bit different today. Normally, I would do some teaching and then reflection and a blessing, but today I wanna share with you a poem by Madeleine L'engle. It's called First Coming. It's something that I would read every few years as a part of the Blue Christmas service at the church where I served. I think it's just a powerful way of sparking our imagination for who God is and what God values and why the word took on flesh, and came and dwelt among us. Why the incarnation is so important and powerful for us, as people of faith.

What I'd like you to do is take a deep breath in and release it slowly.

Maybe close your eyes.

Take another deep breath in, and release it slowly.

And again, a deep breath in and release, slowly.

Now, again, as I read this poem, it's called First Coming by Madeleine L'engle. I want you to just pay attention, notice what words or what phrase speaks to you today, and notice what gives you hope.

## **First Coming.**

God did not wait till the world was ready, till nations were at peace. God came when the heavens were unsteady and prisoners cried out for release. God did not wait for the perfect time. . God came when the need was deep and great. God dined with sinners and all their grime turned water into wine. God did not wait till hearts were pure.

God came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt. To a world like ours of anguished shame, God came and God's light would not go out. God came to a world which did not mesh to heal its tangles, shield its scorn, into the mystery of the word made flesh. The maker of the stars was born. We cannot wait till the world is sane to raise our songs with joyful voice.

For to share our grief. To touch our pain. God came with love.

Rejoice, rejoice.

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What word or phrase from this poem speaks to you today?

What gives you hope?

Take a deep breath in.

And release it slowly.

And now we turn to a time of blessing. I pray a blessing upon you, a blessing of comfort, of peace, of tender joy. I pray that you know deep in your being that our God of love is with you in your grief, in your pain, in your delight, in your hope. I pray that you will always know that you are deeply loved. You are valued. You are enough.

Until next time, Merry Christmas, and be well.