

Birthed Into Chaos

So often we look for a church of certainty. A church that knows what it believes. But the birthing of the early church was not like that! In contrast to the stability and strength of the Temple, the church was born out of the chaos of the rushing wind and entrusted to a group of disciples who had denied Jesus. Why should our contemporary church be any different?

We look for a church
of certainty and strength
a church built on tradition
a church built on doctrine
like the temple of old
standing testimony to Israel's God.

And when the local people
seek to make peace
offering to join in the building
of a temple to the God they share
exclusivity wins
and a people are rejected.

The temple stands
magnificent and proud
a testament to an exclusive God
to division and conflict
it is here that tables are overturned
and animals run amok.

We look for a church
of certainty and strength
a church built on tradition
a church built on doctrine
built by Peter, the rock
Peter, the one who holds the keys.

And a cock crows three times
before the rising
of the Good Friday dawn
Did I not see you
in the garden with him?
No I was not!

At breakfast on a lakeside
the church was conceived
not with walls of certainty
or the strength of stone
Simon, son of John,
Do you love me?

When they had gone ashore
they saw a charcoal fire
barbecued fish and fresh baked bread

Jesus took the bread and fish
broke them and shared them among them
this is my body broken for you.

At the day of Pentecost
the disciples gathered together
shaken once more
by the rush of a violent wind
tongues of fire dancing among them
and the church was born.

The church was birthed into being
not of bricks and mortar
not of doctrinal certainties
not of stayed tradition
but of the chaos of a rushing wind
and the confidence of a dancing Spirit.

And so we gather here
in a place that is far from certain
in a place which is falling down
in a place where future hangs in the balance
and we break bread together
and we pour wine together.

[share bread and wine]

And we say that it is here
where faith is born and nurtured
here where we are called
to care for each other
here where the Spirit dances among us
here where the love of God embraces all.

And we will go from here
into the uncertainties
of the chaos of urban life
not bound to the fetters of the past
or to stones of immovable doctrine
but free to journey with Christ.

For we will go from here
safe in the wisdom we have learned from our past
knowing that there is nowhere
that Christ will not go with us
empowered by the hope of the Spirit
who dances God's dreams into our fragile community.

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