

On Life and Meaning

MARK PERES

Episode 93 – Liz Clasen-Kelly – The Sacredness of Human Life

Christ is Risen

And now a personal word,

Liz Clasen-Kelly embodies what has broken in. She lives the historical event of abundant love that has come into this world. She is engaged in the process of becoming and bringing forth what is already but not yet here. She is partnering with God's salvation.

Liz is living a Christian life. She experiences the living Christ, and her work is a religion of incarnation. Her faith and good deeds convey what it means to be a follower of Jesus and makes known the love that binds us together.

Liz has said yes to the implications of the Gospel: to share and teach and heal; to feeding the poor, caring for the sick, and exalting those who have fallen on hard times; to bearing her own discomfort with joy in the certainty of divine embrace.

Liz has said yes in the tradition of Mary. I imagine the young Mary in wonderment and awe saying yes to God's will. Mary "made possible" the event without which Christianity would not exist: God becoming flesh and dwelling among us. To magnify the Lord, she accepted the stigma of bearing a child while not yet married. She preceded and survived the earthly life of her son to fill the hungry with good things.

Liz has said yes as Jesus himself said yes at Gethsemane. He willed what he did not want. His own suffering and death terrified him. But he gave way to the *mysterium tremendum*. He put himself in the hands of his father to bring forth what was eerie and overwhelming. He would bear the sins of humanity. He would absorb the evils of history in one cataclysmic moment on the cross. And he would live among us again.

Liz does the hundred things every day to serve men experiencing homelessness. She gives them hope. She hears their stories. She provides them a place to rest. So Liz makes possible God becoming flesh and dwelling among us. So Liz makes possible resurrection of life.

There are two theologians whose work inform what I have written: Harvey Cox in an essay entitled "Christianity" in a book called *Our Religions* edited by Arvind Sharma, and Donald Macleod in his book *The Person of Christ*. Both asked the question: what does it mean to be Christian? Both answered that the response is in our myriad human

failings. We are imperfect, deeply so. In those failings, we see the other in ourselves. In those failings, we seek forgiveness and offer kindness. In those failings, we are in and of the world.

The incarnation and resurrection of Jesus may be the singular consequential event in human history. Or it may be an imagined reality and a story told. What is wholly moving and certain is the work of Liz Clasen-Kelly and the dignity of the community she serves.

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