

## *A Note About God*

*4 February 2018 Edna and Port Lavaca*

*Text: Isaiah 40: 18-31[From The Message]*

*One of the pleasures of traveling in Cambodia, Thailand and China is the many temples one can visit. I especially liked Daoist temples with their huge door guards and the many colorful god-images that were in the temple. You knew that the gods were fighting evil spirits because you could see them engaged in spiritual warfare in all of their sculpted splendor.*

*I can sympathize with the Israelites who loved gods of gold and bronze and silver – and even ones made of valuable wood. Of course, they knew better! The One God had been with them since the beginning – yet, time after time, the people either forsook the worship of the One God or combined His worship with the veneration of silver and bronze gods. The feel, the look, the very substance of gods made the people happy and feel secure. Imagine for a moment Isaiah: Bearded, long hair, sunburnt dark skin, wearing sandals or barefoot. And annoyed. . .really annoyed! “Have you not been paying attention? Have you not been listening? Haven’t you heard these stories all your life? Don’t you understand the foundation of all things?”*

*Certainly, none of us can know God, in any meaningful earthly way. But Isaiah tells us three important attributes of God in this passage. Listen to the prophet: “Don’t you know anything? Haven’t you been listening? God doesn’t come and go. God LASTS.” Change is one of those absolutes that we sometimes embrace and sometimes fight – but change always wins. One might not like the direction of change, one might feel that change is challenging long held customs that you hold dear – but like it or not, embracing it or not, change it is.*

*Since I often am trying to diet, I hear a lot of people say: “This year one kind of food is bad, but next year it is ok and another food is labelled bad for you. The doctor’s advice is constantly changing.” The answer to that is: “Yes, advice changes, because food science changes. You do not look to science for eternal verities. You look to science for descriptions and explanations of the material world. Science is not a body of facts, it is a process for discovery and understanding.*

*If you are seeking a constant, a rock that does not change, remember Isaiah: “God doesn’t come and go. God lasts.” Humankind’s interpretation of God’s will changes; we are a people of the Word, but the Word has both an historical context and a present interpretation – that is why we speak of the living Word. The words of the Bible are always being infused with new meaning and new life because God is speaking to the present, as much as to the past. The important thing for us to remember is that “God LASTS.”*

*Isaiah gives us another attribute of God: “Look at the night skies: Who do you think made all this? . . .Don’t you know anything? Haven’t you been listening? . . .He’s Creator of all you can see or imagine.” Unfortunately, the theological know-nothings have hijacked the term Creator and made it into creationism and creationists. But Christians, in general, and Episcopalians, in particular, have as a fundamental belief that God is the Creator of all, or, as Isaiah says: “He’s Creator of all you can see or imagine.” God is the big bang theory made incarnate. No, I do not understand it – I simply feel it. I intuitively grasp God’s presence as Creator, even though I am left without rational explanation. God has given the universe a creative push and humankind has perverted it through the human evils of*

*exploitation, war and death. We have taken free will and used it to create greed instead of co-operation; individualism, instead of community; hate, instead of love. Sometimes I wonder if God regrets Her free-will experiment and someplace else in the multi-verse created a God's-will existence. However, that may be, I appreciate the beauty of the material universe and the glory of living love that exists in God's creation of this universe and, more particularly, of this blue spaceship upon which we live. God LASTS and God CREATES.*

*After all of these wonderful cosmological truths, Isaiah brings comfort to us all in the plainest possible language: "Why would you ever complain, O Jacob, or, whine, Israel, saying, "God has lost track of me. He doesn't care what happens to me?" Don't you know anything? Haven't you been listening? . . .He energizes those who get tired." Ah, enough theology, about which I know little. But, I know tired. And, yes God, I do need to be energized!*

*I get tired of the burden of carrying my own sins, I get tired of yard work, I get tired of greed passing for economic policy and I get tired of hate passing for political discussion. I get tired of our never-ending wars and rumors of war. I get tired of being tired. . . I suspect that all of us get tired of one thing or another. Our lists may vary, but the feeling is the same. But if we let it happen, (there is that nasty free-will bug again) God energizes us. We find a lively order in the midst of chaos, love rising above the murders of war, sacrifices of self for the good of others, beauty of meaning in the midst of uncertainty – all of these things are possible when God energizes us. He may even energize Episcopalians to be apostolic and evangelical – though that is a stretch!*

*Think of the energy available to us. The Spirit of God acting in and through us is capable of achieving great things for the world and for ourselves and for our community of believers. We might never have to be tired again.*

*"Those who serve God, get fresh strength. They spread their wings and soar like eagles, they run and don't get tired, they walk and don't lag behind."*

*God LASTS, God CREATES, God ENERGIZES.*

*Thanks be to God. Amen*