

**6EasterYA2023**

**Awe, Abundance and Advocate**

**By Angela Rausch**

**Good morning and Happy Mother's Day.**

**It is beautiful to be here and I'm honored. This is something I've wanted to do for a long time and I'm grateful for this opportunity and thank you all who have made it possible.**

**I invite you to just pause for a moment, as I pinch myself and remind myself that this isn't a dream, it's real.**

**When was the last time you felt awe?**

**Maybe it was when you heard that talented musician, saw the double rainbow, watched the very cool and clever Tick Toc video, saw the skier do a back flip, or heard your grandchild speak and thought she is brilliant.**

**I have been trained to be CBS, clear brief and Specific so here are three words to keep in mind as we dig into this gospel story, awe, abundance and advocate.**

**In today's Gospel we hear from John. John is a different writer compared to Mt , Mk and Luke. They tend to write**

**from a similar space, which I would say is a head space. I think John writes from a heart space. At the last supper in John's gospel he washes the disciple's feet, the others gospel writers establish the Eucharist. The next chapter of John, chapter 15, he speaks of Jesus being the true vine and we are the branches, this imagery isn't in Matthew, Mark or Luke . The I am the light of the world image and the good shepherd, also only in John.**

**The setting for this Gospel is that it is Jesus' last night with them, the last supper and he is giving what's called his "farewell discourse ." And as they all were reclining he was sharing with them what was to happen.**

**Jesus was trying to prepare them for a life without him. They couldn't hear this nor could they see this. I imagine for some of them they were together for a long time. A world without someone you love, no one wants to imagine that. How do you even prepare for that? I'm thinking they were shutting down.**

**He was saying to them, I will not leave you orphan, I'm sending an advocate that will be with you always. They certainly would have heard the word orphan. They would have known their history. Orphans, in the Old Testament were defenseless and oppressed.**

**Numerous times in the Old Testament we hear about God's favor to orphans. In Jeremiah 7:6 God says, if you no longer oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow and if you no longer shed innocent blood in this place, or follow after other gods to your own harm, only**

**7** then I will let you continue to dwell in this place, in the land I gave your ancestors long ago and forever.

**Orphans were in the same category as the widows, strangers and the poor, basically folks without resources. Jesus they knew, had been teaching and lifting up this group. The disciples had witnessed Jesus helping the marginalized. Heck Jesus broke bread with them. He protects them.**

**If we go back to the last supper, Jesus is giving instructions or rather he's trying to prepare his friends for what is coming. Jesus was offering himself to us , all of us, freely , in the form of an advocate.**

**When I was pregnant with my first child my mother in law told me she was only able to iron one shirt a day and she**

**spent the rest consumed with the baby. She vaguely eluded to an awe that was indescribable. Mind you this was a woman who was super active and operated like she had 26 hours in her day. How could she not get anything done but only iron one shirt? Once my first child was born I got it. There's this awe that transcended me, I was holding the miracle of life, this was and is awe. I remember sitting there holding him and being totally in the moment. Awe is like this, it is something you are not prepared for. It is something that surprises you. It is something that brings you into the present moment. It is something that says you are exactly where you belong.**

**When I told my mom I was going to preach on Mother's Day her first question was what will I wear? So friends on this day I'm wearing a dress to honor her. My mom is one of**

**abundance. Everything about her is abundant. As a child my school lunches were full, tons of snacks and the fattest pb&j's you ever saw. But she is also abundant with her time, she always picks up the phone when I call, even when she is in an appointment, she will whisper, is everything ok and can I call you back. When my mother in law was seriously ill and I was the caregiver, my mother she listened and listened and listened. My mom fully gives.**

**So I have mentioned two words, abundant and awe and now how does advocate arrive?**

**Jesus was sending an advocate. What is an advocate?**

**The greek translation for this word is Paraclete and it literally means, “called alongside.”<sup>1</sup>. Jesus was the first advocate.**

**This word derives from a legal term, a defense attorney. It means, spokesperson, mediator, intercessor, comforter, consoler. This advocate will be with you always, Jesus says. I will not leave you orphans.**

**He knew we need help and he essentially said to his friends and us, I got you. We need to be sustained and supported in a way that God can only. Later in John 14:26 Jesus defines the Paraclete’s role, “ The Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you.”<sup>2</sup> Teach and remind.**

**So this spirit, an advocate is here with awe and abundance. What does this advocate look like in real life?**

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<sup>1</sup> New Testament Methods and Meanings, By Warren Carter and Amy Levine, Abingdon Press 2013, page 78.

<sup>2</sup> Carter and Levin page 78

**I'm involved in many groups, one helps folks who are in immediate need with things like food or rent. Another group does what is called advocacy, working with local governments and the community to affect change. During the height of the pandemic I was sitting in a meeting with my members of the advocacy group and some Sunnyvale city staff. We were discussing housing plans for the next 8 years. I was sharing that the pandemic is really hurting folks. Jobs have been lost and hours cut and this is affecting their housing stability. People in Sunnyvale are housing insecure, ie really struggling to pay their rents. I judged after sharing that this fell on deaf ears. I left the meeting feeling defeated. A week later one of the members our advocacy group said to me that my sharing really affected her and she did not know things were that serious. She heard me. Advocacy works like teaching and teaching takes time. Most of us don't learn calculus immediately it takes time and practice. Advocacy also requests that we stop and notice, we must pause to ask ourselves what am I being shown.**

**The advocate Jesus sends I imagine is one that gently teaches us and comes exponentially with abundance and awe. It is with us always. It is a sense of awe like knowing I was**

**exactly where I was meant to be. And abundance like being freely offered, there is no scarcity.**

**I know that advocate Jesus sends is filled with awe and abundance and it is here. (Place my hand on my heart.) God, Jesus, spirit is love and always with me. It is free. All I have to do is stop and feel it. The advocate sustains. The advocate heals. That's the awe and that's the abundance offered for us all.**

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**Here's a practice that helps me notice...  
Raise your right hand  
Put it over your heart  
Close your eyes**



**Think of all those people who lead you here today.**

**Think about the people who comforted you when you were sick.**

**Think about the people who cheered you on and said you got this.**

**Think about the the person who listens to you as your pour out your heart.**

**Think about the person who hugs your and says it's ok.**

**Now open your eyes,**

**This my friends is the power of love ,this feeling, and I would say it's the advocate revealing herself with awe and abundance.**

**Your homework or spirit work could be to try this practice at home, or maybe to stop and notice this week where the spirit is dwelling and what it is teaching you?**

**Be well.**

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