

LCLI BRIEFING/4 2020-DEC.



2020 vision

Perhaps, like me, you felt at the beginning of 2020 that it had to be a better year than the last. It's certainly been a year like few others, most of which we probably won't want to repeat.

Nonetheless. The actual is not all that is real. There is no mere eternal return to 'the way things are'. Our experience was, is and will be also filled with possibilities - and equally real is our capacity to see them, imagine how to give flesh to them, and to live, with intention and effect, towards what they offer.

May that be the mark of 2021. In that spirit, here are two items to end the year. One is LCLI Fellow Heather Wood Ion's reflection on the birth of babies. The other is about acting in hope for the sake of the diversity of life in the face of what otherwise must give rise to despair.

A Child is Born 2020

I first met my neighbor when she was just starting kindergarten—a timid girl who loved dogs. She is now an accomplished scientist, married to her best friend, eager for every challenge. Last night she gave birth to Noelle, and so the world begins again anew.

Around the world 385,000 babies are born each day, bringing hope and fear and the wonders of possibility to their new parents on behalf of all of us. Facing this strange moment, what do we wish for them? First, that love will nurture their growth and their dreams no matter what circumstances they encounter. May they discover courage, and may it fuel their curiosity. I hope their days and their years are filled with learning. May it grant them understanding that we are all one.

I remember a woman with a baby in Kyoto who told me above all that she hoped her baby would live in peace and know beauty. A public health nurse told me she wished that all the babies she delivered would grow “to bend like willows in the wind, but not break”. One of the pioneer women in our town told me she hoped that children would long to chase the far horizons, while another said she wanted her grandchildren to “be anchored in truth and able, somehow, to serve others”.

It does not matter if the mother and child lie together in a hospital, in a field, in a grand house or a small hut, theirs is a sacred time this first day, and if the father is nearby, no doubt awed and simultaneously exultant, the potential of all creation is affirmed. Sometimes we forget the holiness of that silence as a new family gazes on the tiny sleeping face.

Our time is filled with noise: echoes of frustrations, of fears and rivalries. These seem vitally important for a moment, especially as so many now struggle to find meaning, or nurture, or even survival. We long for messages to emerge from the noise which will make sense of our confusion or reassure that our efforts do have purpose. Recently too many of us have given that noise our attention and so have despaired. Others have amplified the static, trying to shout down their own secret longing for something different.

Let us remember that we are capable of joy. Let us be still and listen for those first gurgles as each newborn makes her presence known. The physicists have told us that we are star-stuff, made of infinite mystery. Let us celebrate that mystery, represented in each new baby, and rejoice as we bear witness.

Heather Wood Ion



NOAH'S SEED BUNKER ...

Opening the facility in November 2000, Prince Charles said: “I feel I am opening the Bank of England of the Botanical World, a place where this reserve currency—in this case life itself—is stored.”

But it's not just an English project. Treaties have been signed with more than 50 nations and seeds collected from 190 nations and territories with the aim of storing at least 25% of the world's orthodox wild plants by the end of this year.

For more [click here](#).