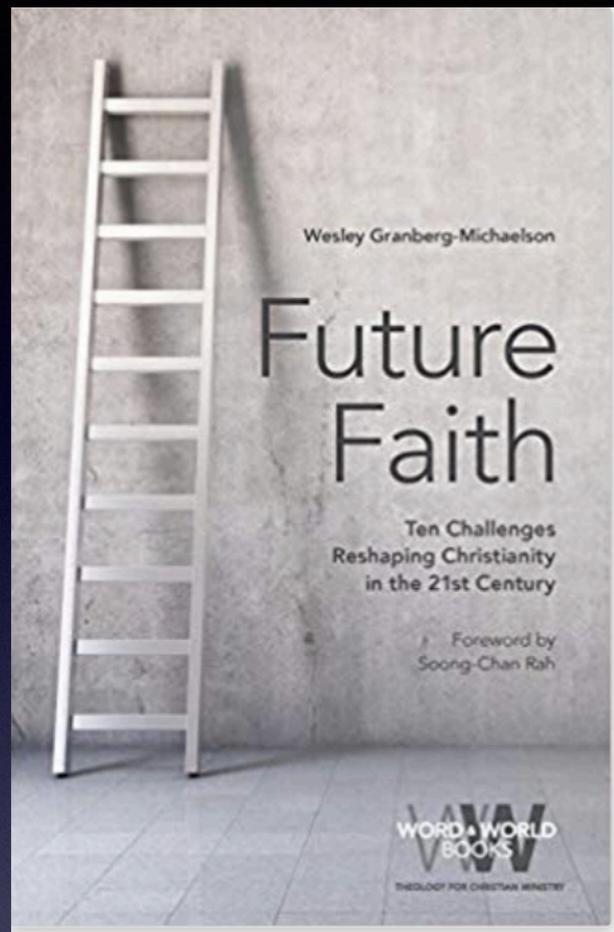


# Future Faith



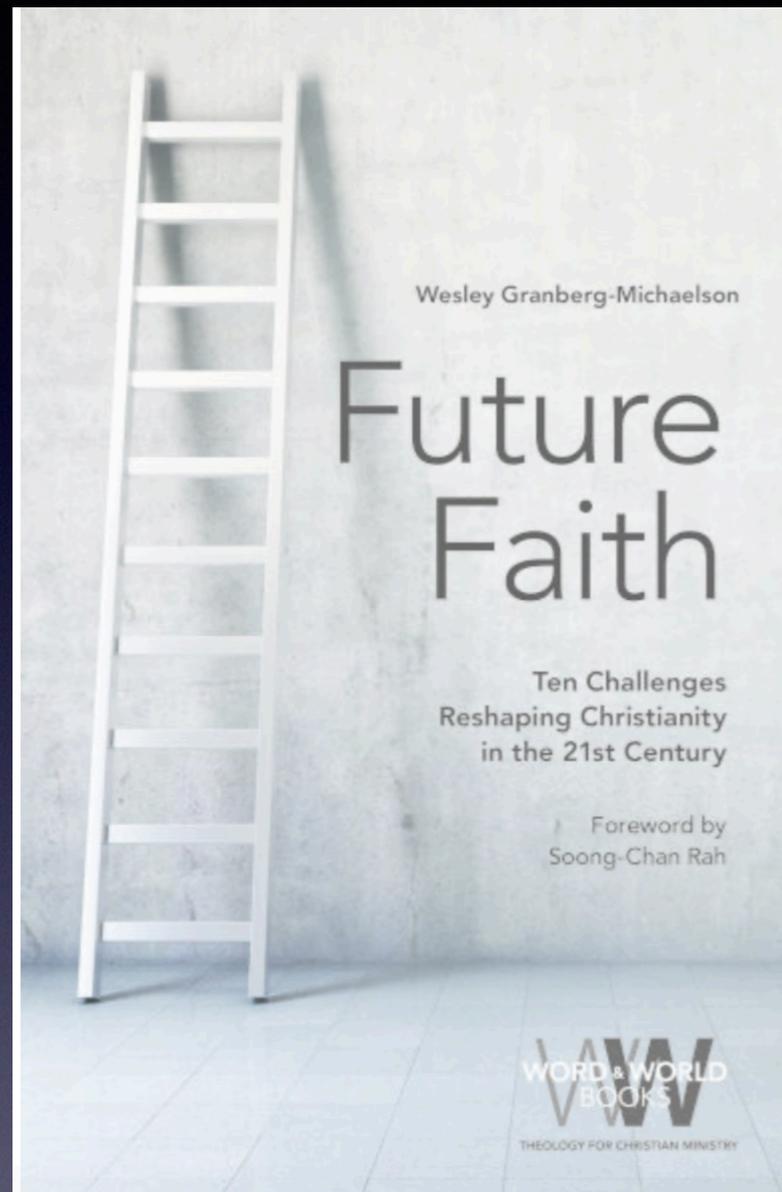
Holy Manner Bookstudy 44  
ACTS - Winter 2020

Session 9 -  
Segment 2

CHALLENGE 10

Saving the World

# Challenge 10 Saving the World



# **Ironic Title**

- **Saving the world is taking on a whole new meaning than that conceived by our author when he wrote his book in 2018.**
- **Uncertainty, stress, blaming — all are features of our daily living in March 2020.**
- **Shelves are emptying, gasoline prices are dropping in relation to the prices of oil and LNG while we read that “The presence of God’s love, upholding all that is, lies completely beyond our understanding.”**
- **Granberg-Michaelson offers an alternative view from traditional understanding...”God’s salvation is always directed toward the whole world.” Not to personal salvation.**



- **“Future faith will be marked by followers of Jesus who are grasped by a love that compels their participation in God’s salvation of this world.” (235)**
- **“Congregations creating the future of faith will understand and demonstrate that the gospel isn’t real if it isn’t making a difference for good in the specific context where it is placed.” (245)**

# Musings

- **“The Gospel cannot be separated from works of compassion and justice.” p. 216**
  - **International Day of Women - Mexico <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxOFI4k4r5c>**
  - **The number of femicides jumped more than 137 percent over the past five years, according to Mexican government statistics. An average of 10 women were killed a day in 2019. More than 40 percent of women who were victims of violence knew their perpetrator.**

# Lent is a Time of Rebirth



**Belonging to a Christian Community seems intrinsic, not optional , and such communities become the agents of wider cultural change.” (p. 217) Is there a message here for us during our current crisis?**

# A DAMAGING DIVIDE

- **Do we see different reactions to COVID-19 from evangelicals/fundamentalists (a category for our author) and the social gospel (the way of Jesus)?**
- **What can the Scopes Trial with its paradigm shifting fallout say to us in March, 2020? Are we experiencing a similar paradigm shift?**

John MacArthur's 'Statement on Social Justice'  
Is Aggravating Evangelicals



**SOCIAL JUSTICE V. THE GOSPEL?**

# Divided Infrastructure: aftermath of the 1920s

- **“Protestant Christians found themselves living largely in two different ecclesiastical worlds, with separate congregations, denomination, inter church organizations and theological institutions.” (219)**
- **What difference has that made in our lives as United Church Christians?**

# **The Rise of Global Communications and its Impact on World Christianity: it...**

- **tended to drive a theological wedge further within world Christianity.**
- **has overcome the faith as exported from European and American countries.**
  - **Personal conversion vs social justice**
- **requires persistent diplomacy in our challenge to save the world.**
- **perceived conflict between “liberal” and “evangelical” institutions - a product of the Global North.**

**WHY?**

# The Micah Network- Social Transformation

Welcome to Micah Global



Communities  
living Life  
in all its  
fullness,  
free from  
extreme  
poverty,  
injustice  
and  
Conflict

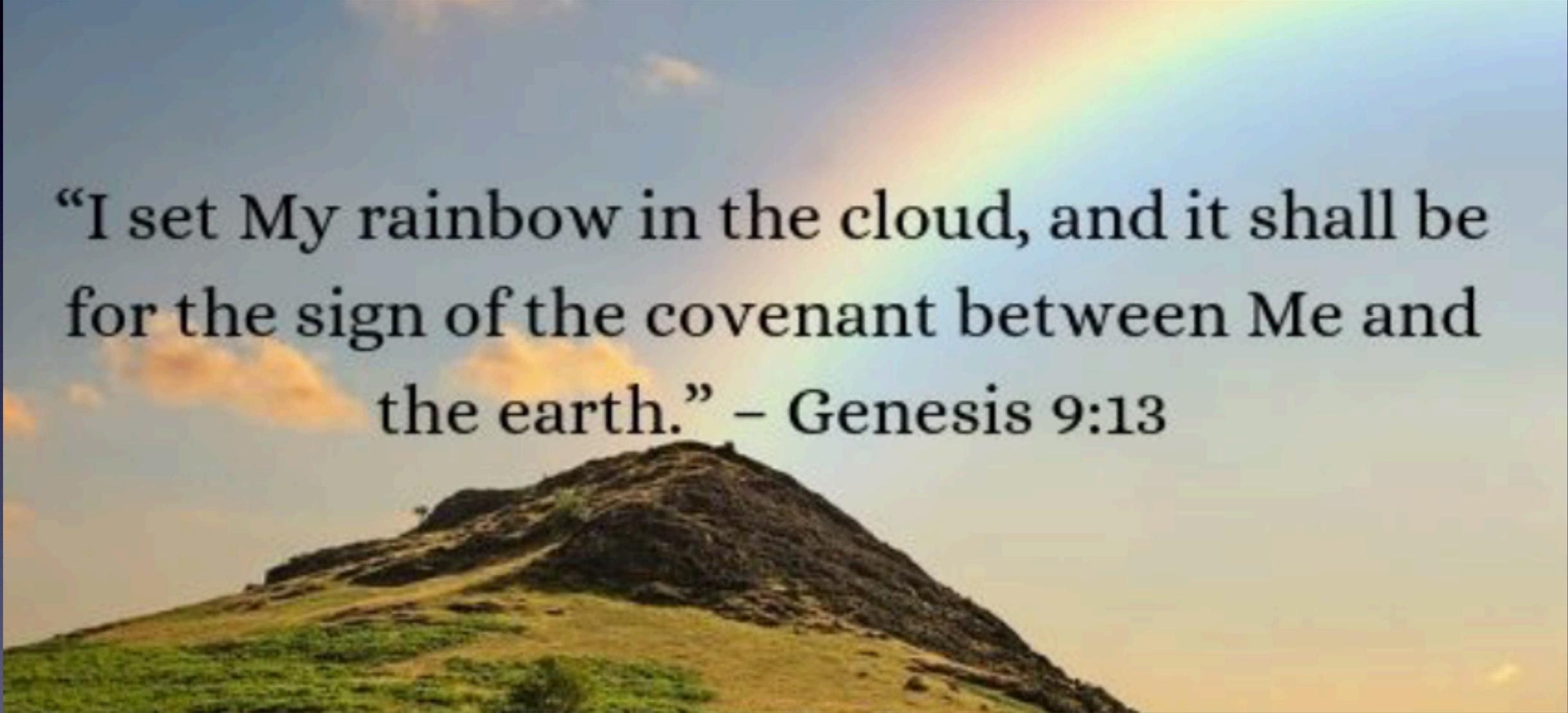
“Justice and justification by faith, worship and political action, the spiritual and the material, personal change and structural change belong together.” (223) Do you agree?

What does freedom from the domination of Western theology, institutional power and money provide?

- **Future Faith tells us that freedom provides a wide spectrum of faith expressions growing in diverse cultures.**
- **Integral missions: “Irrigating land sustainably with windmills, planting churches and halting wife-beating” are organic parts of one whole.**

# **The Basic Theological Challenge: Committed Social Action with a Faith in Progress**

- **“A whole new starting point and fresh paradigm is required.”**
- **God’s work in “Salvation” (i.e. saving the world) must begin by breaking down the wall that divides world Christianity.**
- **The hope is that the church can give its members courage to do good and “can make a difference in the progressive march toward justice.**



“I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.” – Genesis 9:13

# What Does God Love?

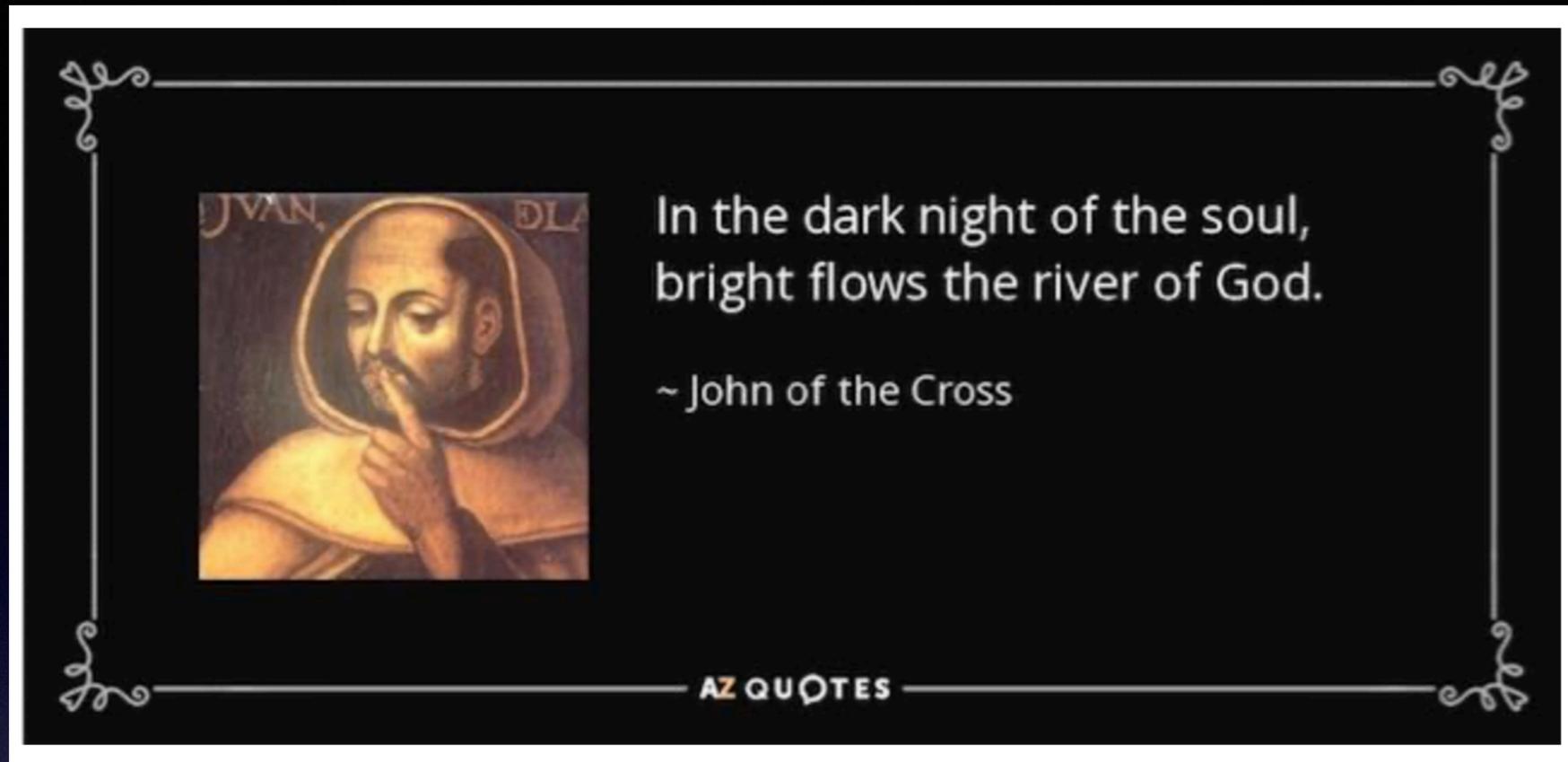
**God's covenant is with the earth.**

- **“I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.”** Genesis 9:14
- **God's love animates and upholds all that God has created.** Psalm 104
- **“The continual process of transformations comes through emptying and filling, through suffering and healing, through death and resurrection.”** (229)

# THE KEY



- **“The inner experience of Christ’s presence through the Spirit connect us to a cosmic reality... The presence of God’s love, upholding all that is, lies completely beyond our rational understanding.”**
- **Does that capture the essence of our faith? Are our “lives and communities the source of shared strength and sustenance?” (230)**  
**Examples??**



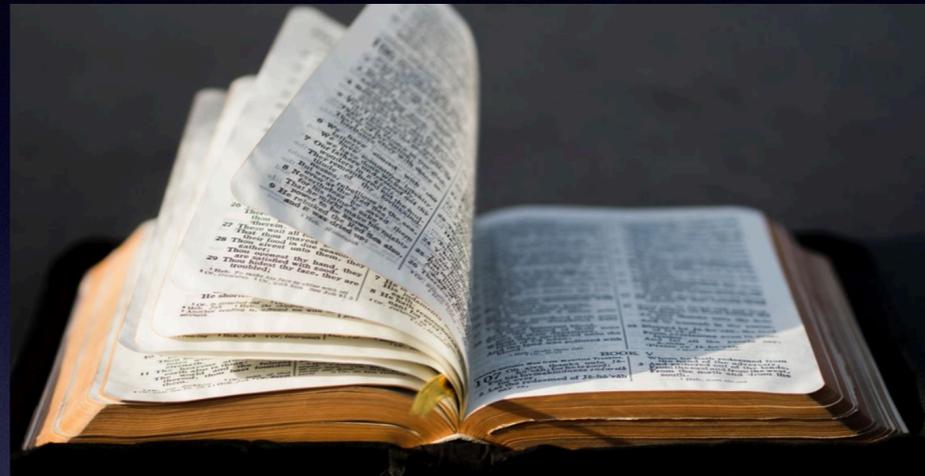
**Granberg-Michaelson tells us on page 231 that the “Dark Night of the Soul” leads to the death of the “False Self.” Richard Rohr speaks of finding the “True Self” which he defines as that part of us that cannot be offended because “it is too large, too grounded, too real” - our eternal essence.**

# Contemplative Tradition: Saving the World

Copy this link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbpOlenUbFwDkMhTFGG3NOg>

- **Non-Western Wisdom: The Generative Nature of God — the fresh expression of ancient faith. “God loves the world and all that God has created.” (233)**
- **The Hope:**
  - that “as Christian Faith grows, it is forging understandings of discipleship and faith formation free from the absurdities of an evangelical vs. social gospel ... (i.e. drawing from indigenous cultural resources.)
  - A gospel that roots followers of Jesus in God’s unfathomable, cosmic love as it engages them in God’s salvation of the world...

**The Gospel isn't real if it isn't making a difference for good in the specific social context where it is placed. (p. 234)**



- **Future faith will be marked by followers of Jesus who are grasped by a love that compels their participation in God's salvation of this world.**
- **What is our direction in March 2020?**

# The Dark Night

## Stanzas Of The Soul

1. One dark night, fired with love's urgent longings — ah, the sheer grace! — I went out unseen, my house being now all stilled.
2. In darkness, and secure, by the secret ladder, disguised,— ah, the sheer grace! —in darkness and concealment,my house being now all stilled.
3. On that glad night, in secret, for no one saw me, nor did I look at anything, with no other light or guide than the one that burned in my heart.
4. This guided me more surely than the light of noon to where he was awaiting me — him I knew so well —there in a place where no one appeared.



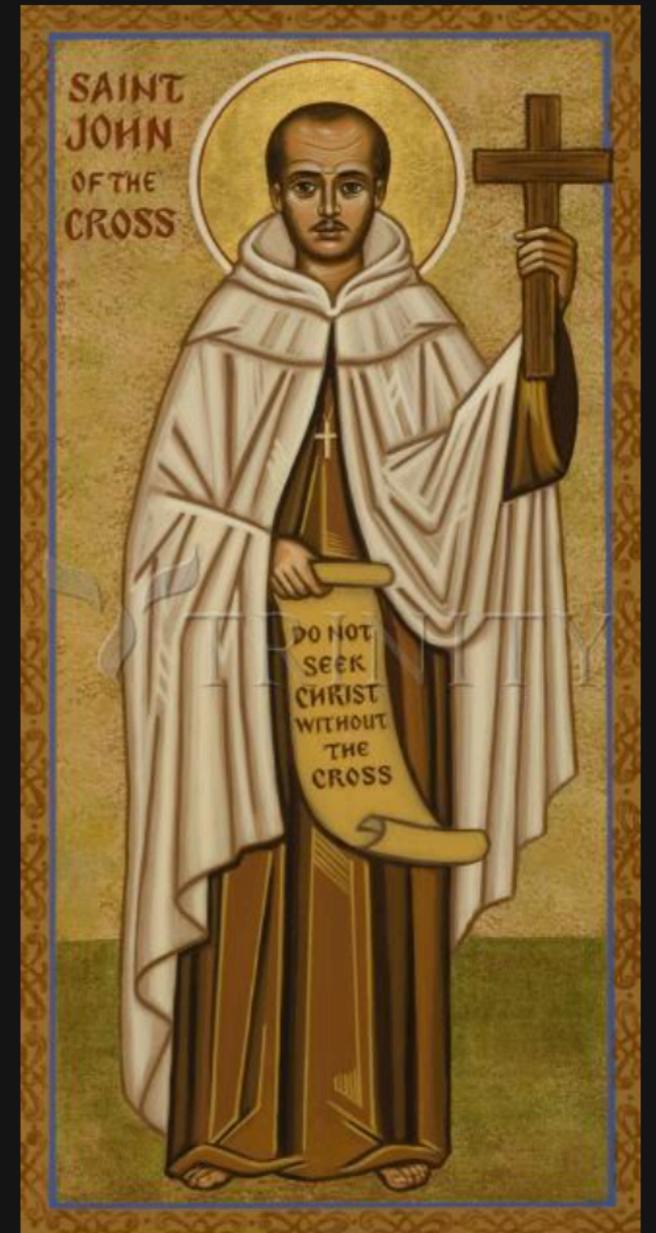
5. O guiding night! O night more lovely than the dawn!  
O night that has united the Lover with his beloved,  
transforming the beloved in her Lover.

6. Upon my flowering breast which I kept wholly for  
him alone, there he lay sleeping, and I caressing him  
there in a breeze from the fanning cedars.

7. When the breeze blew from the turret, as I parted his  
hair, it wounded my neck with its gentle hand,  
suspending all my senses.

8. I abandoned and forgot myself, laying my face on  
my Beloved; all things ceased; I went out from myself,  
leaving my cares forgotten among the lilies.

~ St. John of the Cross



# **When we meet again....**

- **Opening and Closing by Ken Kittridge**
- **Bring along your favourite book suggestion for our fall book study and be prepared to tell us why it would be a great study book.**
- **A ZOOM session might be a way for us to hear from Ken. We do need your suggestions for next fall's book study.**