



## A RAY OF HOPE

Do you ever have the feeling that life is generally and specifically out of control? Recently, I was asking the question, “What next will happen in our world?” as I reflected on the divisiveness that came from the American election. Add to this the on-going news about war, massive suffering and earthquakes. Also add the reality of governments that are self-serving and do not support life in any sense of what that word means. So many other world events can make us feel utterly overwhelmed and helpless. We may even wonder if God is listening or even cares about what we humans are doing to one another and to our fragile earth. Perhaps a better question is, “are we humans listening to God and to the cries of our world?”

As I looked at my own life and pondered this question, I came across an article from the Catholic Register, November 20, 2016. Some new sparks of hope and light shone into my life. The article was about recently deceased, Mr. Leonard Cohen. Mr. Cohen died as a Jew and was buried a Jew. I didn’t know about his search for God and how he had spent time as a Buddhist monk. I must say that I was moved by what Leonard Cohen said about Jesus.

Jesus had to be the most beautiful guy who ever walked the face of the Earth. Any guy who says blessed are the poor, blessed are the meek, has got to be a figure of unparalleled generosity and insight and madness. A man who declared himself to stand among the thieves, the prostitutes and the homeless. He was a man of inhuman generosity, a generosity that would overthrow the world if it was embraced. The compassion of the man has touched me.

As we enter into this new Church year, I plan to spend Advent looking at those who show the more positive face of humanity. I know I need to balance my concern for others and our earth with ‘Good News’. Do you feel, like I do, that the negative news or our negative ministry/work experiences can sap our insight and hope for the future? If you do, you may want to listen and enjoy Leonard Cohen’s *Hallelujah*. Alan Hustak, the writer of the Catholic Register article, wrote that Cohen’s song refers to the story of David and Bathsheba, “which sets up the context for the *Miserere*, the penitential Psalm 51.” This is information worth pondering.

How do we enter into the pain of our world? Who are the people who inspire us and help us find the balance we need? Our increased awareness and ability to acknowledge both the joy and the sorrow in our lives as well as living with an attitude of gratitude may be the gifts of this holy Advent season!

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