

## The Great Cosmic Dance

In the story of his Triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Luke recounts how Our Lord, Jesus Christ was disappointed by men's refusal to acclaim him. He told the Pharisees that even if the children stopped singing his praises, "The stones themselves would cry out." (Luke 19.40)

When he eventually died on the Cross on Good Friday, the stones could not help but cry out. The earth literally released its pent up frustration by quaking. In this particular instance, when men were too blind to see the ignominy of their crime, the stones gave voice to the frustration of the rest of creation. That which was created dumb acclaimed him, because that which was created to acclaim him refused to speak. Even the sun could not help but look away – it hid its face in shame.

Inanimate things praise God by default. They have no free will. They can't defy orders. They always dance to God's tune; they sway in harmony to his melody; they can discern his rhythmic footsteps from afar. They may be dumb like sheep, but they do not mistake their masters whistle. If we who were created supple and agile refuse to dance, the rigid stones will. God's Will is always done; with or without us.

In another episode recounted by both Luke (7:31) and Matthew (11:16), Our Lord uses the following musical metaphor to describe the people of his generation:

To what shall I compare the children of this generation? They are like children playing a game in the public square. They complain to their friends, 'We played wedding songs, and you didn't dance, so we played funeral songs, and you didn't weep.'

Imagine an enthusiastic DJ in a night club excitedly unleashing his latest upbeat melody only to be met by a demoralizing yawn from his revelers. If he didn't think there was something wrong with the crowd that night, he would perhaps consider resigning as the DJ of that club. Such is the frustration of the piper who pipes a tune to listeners who refuse to dance.

Year in and year out, the entire universe dances to the tune of its creator because the *Lord of the Dance* has never stopped playing his melodious flute. At the beginning of the Liturgical year – i.e. Advent and Christmas the mood he tries to evoke is soft and light. He wants us to savour the silent joy of his coming. He wants us to sense it in the air. It is a joy that is ethereal like the music of Enya. During Lent the music he expects us to resonate with is more solemn and heavy. It is bitter-sweet, bluesy... sad with a hint of hope. It has the gravity and texture of the Negro Spirituals – of a trapped soul that is yet hopeful because it knows that its release from prison is close at hand. If the step-patterns of the Christmas season resembled the lightness and brightness of a major scale, then the heavy and nostalgic step-patterns of the Lenten period could be expressed best by the minor scales of

the solfa ladder. Even the dissonances that oft accompany songs sung during this penitential season come off as beautiful because they express so well the anguished mood of the longing soul. During Ordinary Time – the longest period in the liturgical cycle – the piper reminds us the greatness the ordinary. Ordinary things like the smell of soil, the colour of grass and the taste of Ugali and Sukuma Wiki have a charm of their own. The message is that even these “apparently boring and monotonous” things of this world are worth celebrating; because God – who is anything but boring – took part in them. As the liturgical year draws to a close, the piper reminds us of the glory that awaits us. Music experts tell us that the requisite music *mode* that can give us a foretaste of such a glory is the Lydian or Mixolydian. It is the kind of epic music mode we sometimes hear in the soundtracks of heroic sagas and legendary films. They remind us of the pomp that would perhaps accompany the triumphal entry of the great emperors into their cities after conquering their enemies. A glory reminiscent of the crowning ceremonies of the medieval kings and queens of old. If moods had colours, the mood for the liturgical feast of Christ the King would be golden. As golden as the setting sun.

Not only does creation as a whole have its proper melody and step-pattern. In the case of human beings, there is also a melody predesigned for each individual person. This “pre-written melody” is what some call a vocation. Why would he who made each snowflake unique, not make every human being unique? Why would *The Lord of the Cosmic Dance* not assign a unique dance to each of his beloved children? The truth is that he actually does. It is we who refuse to sway along to the beat.

Our faith teaches us that only one human creature managed to synchronize with her “pre-written melody” to a tee. She – the Immaculate One - swayed gracefully to the piper’s tune for the entirety of her life.

“The melody of her life is played just as it was written. Mary was thought, conceived, and planned as the equal sign between ideal and history, thought and reality, hope and realization.”

The World’s First Love: Mary, Mother of God

Fulton J. Sheen

On Oct 13th 1917 a most impressive event took place in Fatima, Portugal. The sun made some brusque movements; unprecedented and outside all cosmic laws. According to the typical expressions of the peasants of Fatima, “the sun danced!” Even though the First World War was going on, the sun did not hide its face in shame. In Fatima, the sun danced excitedly with the only person who has never faltered in keeping up with the tune of the piper. That whirling sun, which spun like a giant wheel and thrust itself to the earth as if it would burn it with its rays, may have been a harbinger of a world spectacle that will draw millions to their knees in a rebirth of faith.

The month of October is a propitious time to dwell on these matters.

At Fatima, the fact that Mary could take this great center and seat of atomic power and make it her plaything, the fact that she could swing the sun “like a trinket at her wrist” is a proof that God has given her power over it, not for death, but for light and life and hope.

The World's First Love: The Woman and the Atom

Fulton J. Sheen