

I'm told that some musicians can hear a whole piece of music in their heads, and then simply write it down. They hear it as a whole piece. I heard of a sculptor who said that he simply chips away the stone that doesn't belong. Consider a painter who doesn't have a picture in mind but simply expresses what is inside, and paints until she knows it is done. An artwork is a whole; it's not just a jumble of pieces thrown together.

Paul tells us that each of us is "God's work of art." God makes each one of us, and then looks and pronounces, "This is good." There's no morality attached to it, as if "orange" is a good color, or B-flat is an evil chord. Just like a snowflake there will never be another piece of art like me; God chooses to create each individual, and then to be manifested to the world through that person -- through you and me, and each of us is a work of art like no other.

Recall the Psalmist who rejoices that "God formed our inmost being; that God knit us together in our mother's womb, and we are wonderfully made." Compare that to a poet who said, "On the day I was created, God was sick."

We may think the same way, hiding what we think is ugly or wrong, ashamed of what we don't like, or what we think doesn't fit. If we think that something's wrong with us, then we're really saying, "God, you messed up. You didn't make me right." It's like Adam and Eve trying to hide their bodies in shame -- but God made them that way!

I think today is a perfect day to take a walk, or to pray alone. It's a day to be with God and make a decision to stop hiding or trying to change or complaining about who we are. When we accept how God made us, then we don't have to use both hands to cover our shame or wear a mask to hide ourselves (figuratively or literally). That wonderful awareness, that we are lovable and that we are loved, I believe, is a real experience of REDEMPTION. Redemption is the grace of God who allows divine light to come into our darkness, which allows us to see correctly and not with our distorted vision.

What are the Scriptures telling us?

- God sees and loves the goodness in us; it is we who are mistaken and hide in shame;
- God's love is unconditional (it's not for later, or if we are perfect);
- God's forgiveness is unconditional (doesn't have to be, and cannot be, earned or even deserved);
- God's grace saves us -- not anything we do; no one can take credit for it.

Can we choose to walk in the light of God's truth about these matters, or do we prefer to remain in the darkness?