

Feast of St Francis transferred  
September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Rev. Sharon Smith  
Texts: **Genesis 1:1-24; Matthew 11:25-30**

**Title: Re-creation: Hidden from the wise, revealed to children**

To live is to change.  
We are changed best by Love.

And change requires trust.  
To trust that each day we are being re-created into something good.

The poetry of the Genesis story so beautifully reveals God's creation and re-creation of our world.

Each day, words are spoken that promise something new, something mysterious, something good, something blessed.

And before we think that we can only understand this if we are intelligent...  
Let me tell you a small part of a much-loved children's story.  
It is a story of re-creation, of change, of goodness, and of love.

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There was once a velveteen rabbit, and in the beginning he was really splendid. He was fat and bunched, as a rabbit should be; his coat was spotted brown and white, he had real thread whiskers, and his ears were lined with pink sateen.

On Christmas morning, when he sat wedged  
in the top of the Boy's stocking, with a sprig of holly between his  
paws, the effect was charming.

There were other things in the stocking, but the Rabbit  
was quite the best of all. For at least two hours the Boy loved him,  
and then there was a great rustling of tissue paper and unwrapping of parcels, and in the  
excitement of looking at all the new presents the Velveteen Rabbit was  
forgotten.

For a long time, he lived in the toy cupboard or on the nursery floor,  
and no one thought very much about him.  
The only person who was kind to him at all was the Skin Horse.

The Skin Horse had lived longer in the nursery than any of the others.

He was so old that his brown coat was bald in patches and most of the hairs in his tail had been pulled out. He was wise.

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

"I suppose you are real?" said the Rabbit.

"The Boy's Uncle made me Real," he said. "That was a great many years ago; but once you are Real you can't become unreal again. It lasts for always."

The Rabbit sighed. He thought it would be a long time before this magic called Real happened to him. He longed to become Real, to know what it felt like; and yet the idea of growing shabby and losing his eyes and whiskers was rather sad. He wished that he could become it without these uncomfortable things happening to him.

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I wonder where you see yourself in the story?  
I wonder where you see God in the story?

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And I wonder how the story of our Earth will unfold...

**Theologian John Caputo writes:**

Creation is God's beautiful risk...

For as God gave inanimate things breath and blessed them, we became bearers of radical uncertainty.

For there is an element of instability built right into creation.

What God has formed is able both to come unformed, to break down or come unstrung – that is the bad news, the downside of risk.

BUT by the same token and for the same reason, things are also able to be reformed, reconfigured, and reinvented.

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Friends, we are being urged by the youth of our world, to wake up to love Earth with full abandon, to become uncomfortable for the sake of her survival, and to participate in her re-creation.

And so, in words attributed to St Francis:

“May God bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that we may live deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, so that we may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and war, so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and turn their pain to joy.

And may God bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done.

Amen.”

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