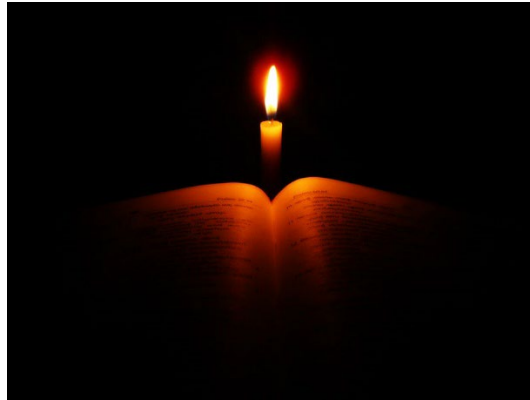


Compassion Pouring Out

Kerrie Hide



Radiant images of creation glowing with golden sunlight and silver moonlight, shine from the pages of the scriptures for this Advent. The hallowed words of each writer reflect the beauty of the Compassionate One who pours out compassion from the very depths of the divine heart, from the *rahamin*-womb-heart into creation. As our hearts listen to the sacred melody of each scripture's song there is an innate harmony created that gives us a sense of the book of the scriptures illuminating the book of creation, illuminating the book of our hearts. Images such as mountains and valleys, fertile pastures, verdant trees, luscious fruits, wild-flowers like jonquils, flowing streams, springs of water, rain, dew, reeds, lambs, wolves, lions, kids, and ox to name just a few, infuse a sense of abundance for all. The vibrant colours of this spring in Australian reflect this abundance. Nonetheless, with the extremes of climate crisis heightening, there is also a sense of creation weeping, groaning, with excruciating pain. In the midst of all this uncertainty, the Advent readings offer us hope, for as Paul reminds us, this is a moment of pain, where we can become like a woman in labour and prepare to give birth (Rm 8:22). Advent is an intensely fertile time for us to be compassionately drawn into the intensity of this labour pain in a way that truly enables the Christ to be born anew in this evolutionary moment.

It has touched me how this year, 2022, the Advent readings expand and deepen how we may become this heart of compassion. The colours, textures and cadence of the poetry of the psalms connects all that is and will be prayed. For me, Psalm 33/34 holds the grounding theme: "Turn towards Love and be radiant and your face will shine with joy" (Ps 34:6). All we need to do is be drawn by our Compassionate Beloved's longing for us, turn even tentatively, and the very turning holds all the energy of the eros of divine desire for us to come home to our hearts and experience our oneness in Love. As well, there is a heightened sense of our vulnerability, of our heart ache, as over and over the psalmists console: "The Compassionate One is close to the broken hearted, those whose spirit is crushed, the Beloved enfolds" (e.g. Ps 34:18-19). Importantly, this compassion has a cosmic quality, extending to the stars as, "the Compassionate One binds up aching wounds, fixes the number of stars and calls each by name" (Ps 147:3-4).

Intoning with the psalms, the readings from Isaiah are also resplendent with compassion, vividly portraying how the All Holy, Compassionate One longs to tenderly comfort and console creation (Is 40:1-2). All who feel barren, who have not given birth can enlarge the place of their tent, open and expand their hearts because, “with everlasting kindness God pours out compassion (רַחֲמֵי הַחַיִּים *ri-ḥam-tik*) and has mercy” (Is 54:8). Vividly, Isaiah describes how this All Merciful, Compassionate One is, “dissolving the death-like shroud enfolding all peoples, the veil hiding nations” (Is 25:7). There is a sense of pathos, of God weeping with us, and with the earth, promising that, “every tear will be wiped away and all shame will be transformed into joy” (Is 25:6-8). Isaiah affirms how the One who is Compassion (מַרְאֲחָמִים *mā-ra-ḥā-mām*) will guide us and lead us to well springs of water (Is 49:10), to life, to freedom, to love. This eloquent Hebrew word, *rahamim* with its source in *rechem* womb, is used numerous times in Isaiah, emphasising how like a mother’s womb enfolding, tending and nourishing a foetus, God holds us in compassion. When the child is ready to be born, God gives birth to us and in the birthing affectionately pours out God’s self in compassion. This suggests that God is a womb of Compassion. And the organic heart-felt sharing of compassion is an expression of who God is. Isaiah’s fecund imagery further implies that creation is conceived in the divine womb that is compassion and is ceaselessly nourished by a divine mother with compassion. Our foundational being and bonding is in compassion. Compassion is natural to us.



Isaiah awakens us to the nature of who God is as *rahamim*, a divine womb of compassion, while in the gospels of Luke and Matthew, we see the most beautiful expression of divine love pouring out compassion in Mary of Nazareth. The gospel writers invite us into the absolute fecundity of divine compassion as the young woman, Mary in the wholeness of her humanity, “found she was with child through the Holy Spirit” (Mt 1:18). Reciprocally, in her translucency to divine Compassion, she becomes a womb of compassion herself, and gives birth to Jesus. As we behold the intense vulnerability of this newly born child, we then see that wrapped in swaddling clothes of compassion, Jesus is the compassion of God. In the second week of Advent we hear Jesus console, “Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I

will give you rest. Take my yoke and learn of me; for I am meek and humble in heart" (Mt 11:28). Yoked to the gentle, humble heart of Jesus, we ourselves can become an expression of his heart-felt compassion that flows from the depthless depths of *rahamim*-compassion. The letter to the Colossians then invites, "clothe yourself in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" (Col 3:21). The enfolding movement of this yoking and clothing draws us into an ever-intensifying oneing, until we become compassion.

I am reminded of the spiritual sight in the showings of Julian of Norwich, where she beholds and sees Jesus as her clothing wrapping her into an increasing infusion of compassion. Her sensually spiritual, luminous imagery invites us into her beholding, to sensually and spiritually feel how this Compassionate One, "is our clothing, who for love wraps us and winds us, holds us and encloses us, hangs about us in tender love, and never leaves us."ⁱⁱⁱ As we yield into this wrapping, winding and holding, and feel the enclosing, we return to the ground of our being that is eternally held in divine *rahamim*-compassion. In the enfolding of this exquisite mutual indwelling of compassion, we release into the newness of an evolving tender loving. We become aware of our being and nature as compassion and intentionally part of the ongoing incarnational flow of compassion into creation.



When we ground and centre in this eternal *rahamim* heart-womb, take time to dwell in Love's silence in prayer, our presence within the felt compassion of this tender, loving heart-womb pours out more strongly into creation. And when we mindfully, heartfully ground in compassion together in our *Contemplative Evolution Network* and intentionally pour out compassion as "We", we create what Judy Cannato identifies as a morphogenic field of compassion. Consciously choosing to open our hearts in communion, shifts our awareness to our eternal origins in compassion and grounds us in the divine *rahamim*, and/or, the womb of Mary, and/or the heart-womb of Jesus. We become this *rahamim* ourselves. We responsively become present, offering all the love of our hearts in a ceaseless unfolding and enfolding of love into the cosmos. In giving ourselves, like a mother loves and gives herself to the child in her womb, an authentic, tangible, alluring, vibrating, ground-swell of compassion pours out

into the world enabling deep and lasting transformation. This compassionate out-pouring of love-energy then creates a stronger morphogenic field of compassion.

In her *Field of Compassion*, Judy Cannato draws us into the felt sense of this field of compassion that is the ground of who we are. "Compassion changes everything," she affirms.

Compassion heals. Compassion mends the broken and restores what has been lost. Compassion draws together those who have been estranged or never dreamed they were connected. Compassion pulls us out of ourselves into the heart of another, placing us on holy ground where we instinctively take off our shoes and walk with reverence. Compassion springs out of vulnerability and triumphs in unity.^v

As we seek to come home to the divine *rahamim*-womb-heart that is the ground of our heart-womb and pour out compassion to all, from the depths of our mutual indwelling, may we expand in our capacity to be pulled out of the scarcity of our isolated self, into the heart of what seemed like other, until we truly know we are one. Grounded in compassion, we are one, mutually indwelling each other in an evolving relationship of compassionate oneing. And crucially, every part of creation, from the tiniest dew drop, to the endless expanse of the stars, participates in this oneing. Accordingly, we can celebrate our vulnerability as the Christ child is born anew this Christmas from the intimate depths of our *rahamim*-womb-heart personally and communally and rejoice in unity. We can live in hope and joy, for *We* are the compassion of God.



ⁱ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Holy_bible.jpg

ⁱⁱ Unknown Italian Master late 15th century,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:15th-century_unknown_painters_-Madonna_del_Part_-_WGA23928.jpg

ⁱⁱⁱ Julian of Norwich, *A Revelation of Love*, Long Text, Revelation 1, Chapter 5.

^{iv} Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Madonna and Child*, 1319.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swaddling#/media/File:Ambrogio_Lorenzetti_021.jpg

^v Judy Cannato, *Field of Compassion* (Notre Dame: Sorin Books, 2010), 8.

See, Marie Azzarello, "Mary and the Cosmic Christ", <https://www.globalsistersreport.org/column/arts-and-media/mary-and-cosmic-christ-55996>