

# The People of the Roundtable

*Called to be a Church of the Synod*

There are some carpenters in town  
and they're making of our daises  
—where kings and lords used to sit—  
a roundtable.

It's a table at which a synod will be held,  
a gathering of the People,  
a coming together of hearts and minds.

They're busy now—these carpenters—  
sawing and sanding and surveying  
so the table will lose its head  
(which wasn't in the right spot anyway)  
and take on its new shape.

And its shape will be round indeed  
without a head or a foot  
but only with a company of people  
who sit together in discernment  
hearing the echo within as it guides them.

We can hear better at a roundtable  
because no one can outspoke another  
and all will listen with open hearts.  
Each one's voice will be resonant and clear  
and no one's voice will be unheard.  
No more long narrow tables where some seem wise  
and a few without merit  
with others on the outside looking in  
while some have a voice  
but most don't  
and someone's always at the foot.

When we listen, we will hear  
and to our surprise and delight  
we will recognize that others experience faith

in ways that we do not  
and the Holy One speaks through all.  
The hearing and understanding will lead us to mercy  
—and to faith. Faith in what?  
Faith in how God speaks in the hearts  
even of those whose stories  
we do not understand.

It won't be easy for those who once sat  
on the dais alone and lonely and lone actors  
or for those who preferred to keep silent  
but our new roundtable journey  
will only lead to service and humility.  
We will coach and love all former throned or silent ones  
into the gathering of the People of the Roundtable  
where all will find in the end  
that, when it comes to the presence of the Holy,  
each of us has a place there  
and no one has more place than others.

There will be some sawdust when we do this,  
as we cut and shape and sand and hone ourselves  
into that Roundtable form  
but carpenters know about sawdust  
because that's how crosses are made.

It takes some dying to self to sit in our place  
when we are accustomed to a dais.  
But each of us will soon put on an apron  
take a basin of water,  
and proceed around the room  
to wash another's feet.  
We will come out at the end precisely where we should be  
—which is to talk together as one.

Here we will find that heaven and earth have come together  
into the Kingdom of the Roundtable  
and the one at our head is called Holy.

We will learn that the reign of the Holy One is very near  
when we follow the way of the carpenter.

We will find at our shared roundtable  
that we have been given enough bread  
to sustain ourselves and feed the world.

Each will know forgiveness and grace  
because we will pardon those who offend  
and love even those who annoy.

We will have protection when we sit together.  
We will succeed when facing temptations for power  
and be safe when facing the evil of domination.

And instead, the People *become* the Roundtable  
and find the kingdom of listening,  
the power of collaboration,  
and the glory of dialogue. Amen.

Bill Huebsch © 2023

*Inspired by Chuck Lathrop and King Arthur*