

A Contemporary Reading: Gender by m jade kaiser of *enfleshed*

There are so many ways to speak of gender.

Gender like a collage - scraps and traces, bits and pieces, hints and fragments, of the obvious and discernible, arranged imaginatively and intentionally to craft a whole new picture.

Gender like a constellation - a particular manifestation of the infinite possibilities for stringing together a life, a story, a set of traits and characteristics, longings and loves that offer somewhat of an outline, a suggestion, an insinuation of one way of being.

Gender like a beloved family recipe - passed down with love and respect, but altered, slightly or significantly, to suit a time, a place, a person.

Gender like soil - formed by millions of tiny granules ancient and evolving still, compost of pasts enabling life to bloom.

Gender like water - taking different shapes and forms depending on its surroundings, more flow than final.

There are so many ways to tell the story of who we are.

There are so many ways to break open the rigid containers of a colonial making. The binary – the creation of a two gender system with harsh and polarising boundaries - is not made for life but for domination, in gender and in race.

For lifegiving truth in contemporary expression

Thanks be to God.

A Reading from the Gospels: Mark 13:1-8

As Jesus was leaving the Temple, one of the disciples commented in passing, "Look, Teacher! What huge stones these are! What wonderful buildings!"

Jesus replied, "See these great buildings? Not a single stone will be left on another. Everything will be torn down."

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives facing the Temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, "Tell us, when will all this happen? What will be the sign that all this is about to take place?"

Jesus began by saying, "Be on your guard that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name saying, 'I am the One,' and they will deceive many. When you hear of wars and rumours of war, do not be alarmed. Things like this must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation and empire against empire; there will be earthquakes throughout the world and famines—yet this is only the beginning of the labour pains.

For the love of God in Christ Jesus

Thanks be to God.