



April 5, 2020

The Temptation to Rush

This Lenten season has been unlike any I can remember. It has felt like a journey in a wilderness and yet I know that I like many people have been privileged to have safety of shelter and nourishment, both physical and spiritual while I have endured these days. This has been a moment of fully accepting my own humanity, limitations and interconnectedness of all creation.

We have now arrived at Holy Week once again. It is one of my favorite liturgical moments because it invites us to be fully present in this last week of Jesus' earthly life. This is where the fullness of his humanity is in full view and it is uncomfortable. It can be so uncomfortable that we might be tempted to rush to Easter Sunday and get it over with. Let's hurry up and rush to the joyful part, the fun part, the happy part. But I know you know... life just isn't like that. Resist the temptation to rush and BE fully present. Perhaps these most recent days have made that spiritual practice of sitting in the uncomfortable moments more possible.

Maria Harris was a religious educator who gave the inaugural lecture of the Ward Lecture Series about the subject of wonder at Lancaster Theological Seminary. She addressed the gathered community and invited us to slow down and be in the present moment. I think she tried to help us understand that to be really open to wonder...to really be able to recognize wonder...we must slow down. It isn't just about shortening the "to do" list or "staying in place" orders. It is about slowing down our hearts and minds so we can recognize the incarnation of God in our midst. During her talk she paused to teach us a responsive chant. It goes like this,

*Sisters, brothers-
take your time go slowly.
Listen deep within yourself,
every hour is holy.*

Psalms Sunday is an entry point...not just into Jerusalem...but an entry point for us to embrace the humanity of Jesus. The One whose journey was a very human journey. This is a week when he experienced the ultimate hypocrisy, betrayal and suffering of human existence. While we may want to rush past this...while we may want to quickly trade in the palm branches for what is to come next Sunday...don't give in to the temptation to rush. Go slowly. Listen deeply. Every moment of this journey is holy.

In the United Church of Christ, we love to say "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey...you are welcome here." This week, I want to invite you to remember...No matter where you are or how you are observing the journey of Palm Sunday to Easter...we are people on a journey together...in body and spirit. BE present...surrender the temptation to rush. Surrender the things of this world that distract you from being fully present as a human being. The spiritual practice of our human experience will lead us to that day of extraordinary wonder.

Siblings of the faith...take your time. Breathe and go slowly. Listen deeply within your own location and remember...every hour is holy.

Blessings and Peace,
Rev. Dr. Susan A. Minasian,
Interim Associate Conference Minister for Search and Call



Palm Sunday / Easter Activities for Youth

Parents, if you are looking for ways to engage your younger family members and bring Easter week into your home in a fun and meaningful way, below are just a few of the websites that are available for your use.

ministry-to-children.com and sermons4kids.com

From the UCC: COVID-19 facts without falsehoods or fears

The United Church of Christ started a new website with daily updates on the COVID-19 pandemic with "facts, not falsehoods or fears. To access this website, use the following web address:

https://www.ucc.org/daily_covid_19_brief