

5th Sunday of Easter

May 10, 2020

I am blessed to have an office on the second floor of my home, surrounded by large trees, bird feeders and all manner of birds, squirrels, and the occasional wanderings of wild turkey and deer. To look out my window and see all of God's creation each day has helped immensely during the current social distancing. I do not take this for granted as I know that many people are sequestered in small spaces and with many family members and pets. My husband and I are very fortunate to have these spaces and we know that. Having said that, the awareness of this devastating virus making its way across our state, our world, hits me like a slap every morning when I open my eyes and remember why we are not going anywhere today and why.

I remember that we have passed St. Patrick's Day, Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Easter, and now Mother's Day without being together for worship, or family dinners and get togethers , friends, classmates, graduation, birthday celebrations, anniversaries.

Not since the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918 have we experienced such a pandemic, The great depression, world wars and 9/11 notwithstanding, we are in the midst, I believe, of a global tragedy, and a real turning point in our lives as residents of planet Earth.

But we have an anchor and we have hope.

What a soothing balm it is to hear the words of John's gospel this morning.

“ Do not let your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe also in Me”

“ In my father's house are many dwelling places, and I go to prepare a place for you. “

I have read this passage many times at memorial services. The words are very comforting for those who have experienced the death of their loved one, to know that they have been welcomed into eternity, in that place of all encompassing love.

I read them this morning with an eye on how eternal and everlasting is the presence of Jesus in our lives, and how we can depend on that Love and assurance as we move into a new reality of what our world is becoming.

When Jesus said these words to his disciples, he was preparing them for his death, but he was also assuring them of His everlasting Love and presence with them through the Spirit.

When I think of all we have experienced in the past few months, I think of how it changed our lives emphatically in a matter of days. I do not believe that we will be returning to the old normal. We are entering a new reality.

But living in Faith means that we are always going through to something new.

And we are going to do that just as Christians have always done, with the firm knowledge that we will be guided and affirmed by God's Love. Jesus promised his disciples, as he promises us "Trust in me, I will never leave you."

1st Peter describes us as living stones, that we will build together into a Spiritual House, wherever we are at home or hopefully in our sanctuaries, out in the open, wherever, we are the body of Christ. And Jesus is our Cornerstone, steadfast and our leader, our guide.

We remember the words of Jesus. "Believe in God, believe also in Me. I am the Way and the Truth and the Life." No one and nothing can separate us from that Love. We need to believe that with all our hearts, and pray for each other and for our world. We need to do what each of us can to stay connected as a faith community and to help others who are struggling to keep their lives together.

We can do this. I love this often quoted phrase from our British brothers and sisters during the Blitz in WWII. "Stay calm, and carry on."

I want to say a bit about Mother's today. I am in awe of parents who are home schooling and managing to work from home and care for their children at the same time, and for all that it demands. This should be Parent's day, but Dads, you get your time in June.

For all Mothers and for those who have had a motherly role in our lives, bless you.

I have loved being a mother to my 4 children, and helping to parent them with my husband, and grandchildren are the precious reward. If you can say thankyou to someone who has loved and nurtured you, listened to you, BEEN there, call them or text them today.

If they are in heaven with Jesus and the Father, say a prayer of thanksgiving for them, and for giving you life.

May all of our lives be filled with thanks and praise. AMEN