

Rev. Curran Reichert FCCS March 17, 2020

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous hand.”  
Isaiah 41:10 NIV

Simple Song; Morning light help us find, peace of mind this day.  
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### The Sacred Journey Inward: Part One

The safest and most helpful thing each of us can do right now in this time of slowing down, is to allow ourselves to get very still and to listening for the voice of inner guidance, and inner wisdom.

“I have learned to be attentive to what speaks to the deepest ground of my being.” Macrina Wiederkehr

There are very real dangers afoot for certain, but chief among the perils of this time is the illusion that by immersing ourselves with news about the spread and containment of the Corona virus we will have more control over this situation than we actually do. More dangerous still is the idea that by generating activity we can avoid feeling the very real and deep loss and disorientation that accompany this pandemic.

Cold hard fact: we are not in control and never have been. We have amassed great networks of false promises to assure ourselves that we are in the driver's seat at all times, but anyone from a war torn or impoverished nation will tell you that the illusion of control is likely to crumble away at the first blush of distress. Beloved we are not in control and it is time we deal with that fact; not avoid it, not cover it over, not run from it- instead, as faithful people, stand squarely in the center of it and breath.

Here is a suggestion for a mantra;

*I am not in control, you are not in control, they are not in control, we are not in control.*

When we start to feel ourselves clenching at things that we feel must be done, “right now!” Spiritually courageous people will pause and ask, does this really need to get done or am I pretending that if I stay busy enough I might be able to feel that I am in control? That need to control and predict the future is driven by our ego, that is not a trustworthy NorthStar because the ego cannot predict the future. No one can.

Once we give up the hope of controlling our lives or the lives of anyone else, once we tire of organizing the sock drawer and cleaning out cupboards, we may realize that this season comes equipped with a brilliant invitation to listen and lead from the heart. But the heart has its own rhythm and what is hidden there cannot be forced to reveal itself just because we have trumped up deadlines for it to meet. Let’s face it- we have nothing but time on our hands right now.

*It is under the greatest adversity that there exists the greatest potential for doing good, both for oneself and others.*

*- Dalai Lama -*

I believe that there is a great need to sit for long periods of time right now, not on our phones or streaming videos, but to sit quietly and absorb the shock of what is happening within and around us. Friends there is nowhere to go- we are on lockdown.

Ponder what it might feel like to be on lockdown every day of one’s life? Pause to remember those who are in detention cells, holding cells, cells without windows, cells of our making and those who profit from them.

When Jesus says that he has come to set the prisoner free, could it be that he is talking about the physical yes, but also about the spiritual discomfort of lockdown? Could he be speaking to us about coming face to face with our powerlessness and learning to find freedom therein. Could he be telling us that no amount of business will free us from our chains, only being present with those chains will set us free. We cannot run our way out of this situation, it is what it is and we have a choice about how we are with it.

Friends, we have been praying for Divine guidance to help us undo the damages we have done to the earth, the climate, the poor, the immigrant, the disenfranchised, and the incarcerated- with the world at a standstill this may be the very moment for which we have been waiting. For a brief moment there is actually time to think, to search our souls and to ask what part we have played in all this destruction and what part we might quiet literally play in the healing of the nations.

### **Suggested Activity:**

Pull out a piece of paper and write down what you want to do, who you want to be, what you want to learn, and how you want to contribute in this powerful time of change.

Ever wondered what monastic life would be like, here is our chance. Nuns and monks strive to bring peace and calm to every action, they strive to engage in mundane work in a spiritual way. Every action is a window into the Divine. Can you imagine seeing your life in that way, embracing each day of this less-ness with a different kind of more-ness.

There are no doubt gifts that social media is bringing to this moment in time, but they are nowhere near as momentous as the gift of returning to life as it was meant to be...with less consumption; less input, less output, more time to think and reflect, to read and write, to pull weeds and plant flowers, to prepare a meal by hand, to make bread, to breath into the fear and discover what courage actually feels like.

We have convinced ourselves that courage looks like action and sometimes that is true, but spiritual courage also resembles stillness, savoring the birdsong and the shape of an Oaktree against the clouds, and rest, deep rest.

Here is another way to look at it, you can make music with a synthesizer, but it will never feel like it does to make music with a baby grand- it is in sensing the vibrations of the wood, the action of the keys, the felt pads as they land to quiet the ringing of the strings or the gentle pressure of an artist's foot against the pedal prolonging the note for just an instant longer that is where the magic lives. The mystery that is mana is the exchange between the pianist and the piano, the player and the listener. Spirit is like that too, a myriad of exchanges that we mostly move to fast to appreciate.

What if we focus on remembering moments when we really did feel connected to the mystery?

What would it look like to linger there awhile, allowing ourselves to share our sacred stories with one another and dwelling in those moments of grace knowing that they will indeed come again- for out of the ashes the phoenix does rise and out of the depths of the tomb resurrection will come.

This is a golden and rare opportunity to decide how we want to live. It is a once in a lifetime, once in a century opportunity to reset the clock and to choose our path forward. Take the time to think about it- that is the most courageous thing we can do right now and right now is all we have.

Sing: I look into my heart for the wisdom, the wisdom

I look into my heart, for the wisdom to live this day well.

Amen