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Lectio Divina Life: "Savoring"

Matthew 5:9

Rev. 7:9

Luke 24:36

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We are now on the second week of our series "Lectio Divina Life", in other words "a Divine reading of life". Last week, I shared that Lectio Divina has four movements according to Christine Valters Paintner, and they are: shimmering, savoring, summoning, and stilling.

That was the work of my sabbatical: watching for what shimmers in my life and the world, savoring that, respond what it is summoning me to do, and then follow the doing by stilling. This too is the work we are asked to do in Lent. Thus, last week I talked about shimmering. This week our focus is savoring.

The word "savor" comes from the Latin word meaning "to know" (*sapere*), and is the root of the Latin word for wisdom (*sapientia*). "Savoring and wisdom are connected at their root meaning. We don't gain wisdom by rushing through life and skimming across its surface, but by going slowly and diving deeply." (Christine Valters Painter, Lectio Divina) Instead, we are encouraged and even demanded by our culture to rush through our tasks, to do it all, to experience as much as possible.

Savoring is when we make space for the free form of possibilities without making judgments that cut them off. Our analytical mind often wants to cut off possibility and move to swift judgment and decisions.

Savoring implies lingering with the experience; it is the opposite of hasty consumption. Savoring implies “hospitality beginning with receptivity as a posture of invitation, openness, and possibility.” (Nanette Sawyer, *The Sacred Art*) When we savor we exercise the qualities of awareness, attentiveness, and presence.

With all that in mind, let’s jump into two of the final events of Lent: Palm and Passion Sunday.

Let’s savor for a few moments the fanfare and words of Palm Sunday:

Jesus comes riding on a donkey.

Palm branches being placed on the road before him.

People shouting “Hosanna” which means “Save us”.

Savoring includes not jumping to conclusions too readily with assumptions. Jesus was sending them clear signals. Look! Really look! Open your mind and hearts. Don’t assume I am riding on a war horse like all other kings you have had and do have. Instead, notice, be open to, and see I am the organizer and head of a peace march. “Oh my”, they didn’t get the Jesus they wanted. Rather, “hooray” they got the Jesus they needed!

I think one of the worst things we can do during the season of Lent, including Holy Week, and even Easter is for us to think it is all about Jesus did for us, and nothing about what we are to do!

According to the Gospel of Matthew, right after Jesus returned from his 40 days of temptation in the wilderness he launches his public ministry by gathering the crowd around him and he begins to teach them. The Church has called these three

chapters of teaching: the Sermon on the Mount. I title it in my mind, "Jesus' Agenda for Us".

If we stop at Palm Sunday, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection and see that as just what Jesus does for us, then we have a personal piety that is nothing more than "it's all about me." And I am sorry to say, that is never the way Jesus meant us to take it (at least according to scripture).

Don't believe me, check out Jesus' first words to his would be disciples "Come, and follow me." Take his last words, post-resurrection, just before his ascension to heaven Jesus says, "Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations..." In other words, it has always been about what we are to do too. Come, follow, go, make are participatory, movement words – verbs. They are about giving, going, and doing. They are not about merely receiving, being stationary, or grasping for all an individual can get. "Oh my" what Jesus wants is for us to be about needs – "Hooray" others, not merely what we as individuals want?

Jesus in the agenda for us, the Sermon on the Mount talks about us being peacemakers. He says, in Matthew chapter 5 "God blesses those who MAKE peace, for they will called God's children."

And I find it interesting that when we get a snapshot of the end of time in the book of Revelation we see a similar scene to Palm Sunday. There is a large crowd waving palm branches before the throne of the Lamb (in other words Christ). The interesting thing to note is that in the crowd is p every race, tribe, nation and language. How did they get there? How did this happen? It looks like by the end of time we did do Jesus' agenda for us. We took part in his peace march. We became peacemakers and

we believed and lived out that God's perspective: we are all loved and that we are to love one another, we are one.

Now, many would say the Crucifixion is a whole other thing. Yet, I see it as Part 2 with Palm Sunday being Part 1 and the Resurrection being Part 3. Let me explain.

I am convinced that Jesus crucifixion on the cross was not just about what he could do for us, but what he would like us to do for him and the world.

I worry that too often we have heard the words of Jesus interpreted from the cross with a spin given to them by the Church insinuating that the cross is only about us gaining personal salvation and is not about communal salvation for the whole world.

What were Jesus' words from the cross. They are about Jesus relationship to God:

"Why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46))

"It is finished." (John 19:28-30)

"Into your hands I commit my spirit." (Luke 23:46)

And, four sayings have to do with our relationships with one another :

"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

"Today, you will be with me in paradise." (Matthew 27:42-43)

Behold, your mother... Behold, your son." (John 19:25-27)

"I thirst." (John 19:30)

Similar to the Ten Commandments where the first three are about our relationship with God and the last seven are about our relationships with one another.

The King of the Jews who came to bring peace, who some made fun of because they did not want to savor the king who would bring peace to them, to us, and to the whole world. Maybe, they did not want to savor what he said, because they knew it would require something of them: to forgive, to see each others as family, to include and not exclude, to not be vindictive, cruel and violent, and go about meeting other's basic needs. Oh my", they didn't get the Jesus they wanted. Rather, "hooray" we got the Jesus we all needed!

Jesus counted on his relationship with God giving him what he needed in order to be able to go to, stay on, and even die on the cross – so that all the world could be at peace, and know we are one.

And so we end today, with t Part 1 and 2 of God's agenda for us. Part 3 is yet to come, just days away. Hope to see you Easter Sunday. Where we will once again not get the Jesus we may want, but rather get the Jesus we need. Hooray!

Invitation, openness, and possibility