

Everyone I've spoken to over the past three weeks, whether by phone or video call, by email or Facebook post, has echoed the same sentiment. We miss one another. We miss coming here to this place. We miss our routines and we miss hugs. We miss sharing meals together, the Eucharistic meal more than anything. In an age of technology that allows us to be more consistently connected than ever before, it is being revealed to us more and more each day that our virtual connections are both an inconceivable blessing and not at all sufficient. Seeing a photo of loved ones does not even compare to holding them close to us. Saying I love you through a microphone and hearing it through a speaker are not good enough. Recorded music is not the same as a live recital, and recorded prayers feel very different from the full presence of the church gathered in worship. Watching the liturgy on a TV or computer screen is not good enough.

None of this is good enough. There are a thousand different ways to pull it off, a hundred different technologies to employ, infinite creative possibilities, and none of it is good enough. And it shouldn't be. Worshipping in isolation from one another is not good enough because it shouldn't be. Being apart is not good enough because we were not made for loneliness, but for love. We were not made for distance, but for closeness. We were not made for self-sufficiency, but for mutual dependency and entangled community. We were made to be in communion, to experience communion, to BE communion. Physical, bodily, incarnate communion with one another and with the God who creates, redeems, and sustains us. That is the only thing that will ever be good enough, the only thing that can ever meet our longing and grant us refreshment. That is what is being revealed to us by the Grace of God that is still fully alive and active in this

time of fear and sickness and death. Just as Ezekiel prophesied to the dry bones and the Lord knit them back together, we in this dry valley ache to be rejoined, one to another. This plague **did not** come upon us in order that God might teach us something, but we know that Jesus Christ walked among the sick and the secluded, teaching and healing both rich and poor, sick and able. This is what we are called to as those who have been washed in the healing waters of baptism and sealed as Christ's own forever. We are called to look inward, to listen deeply in this unexpected stillness. The yearning, the voice in our hearts crying out for one another, points us back toward Christ, in whom we belong to one another beyond social expectations or blood relations.

The yearning we feel to be together, to reach out and touch one another, the longing to receive the physical substance of the bread and the wine, the need to approach the altar of God and kneel before it with our hands outstretched- that is a God-given, spirit-filled, baptism-born desire. That is the image of God in us, reaching out for the image of God reflected in our brothers and sisters. That is the disciple in us, calling out for our teacher to interpret the world with us, to show us how God could possibly love us through our separation. That is the seal of the Holy Spirit, marking us as Christ's own forever. That is the child in us, recognizing at our deepest level that we rely on God for everything, for our daily bread, for the food that nourishes our bodies and for the spiritual food that sustains our lives. We are being reminded of the sacredness of communion. Not just the body and blood of our Lord, truly present with us, but the communion we share in being with one another bodily, taking up space and encountering one another with our senses. This communion, this incarnate, embodied presence is the reason

Jesus had a body, the reason Jesus was born of a mother. This is the reason the son of God thirsted and hungered and rested and felt big feelings and spent most of his life surrounded by family and friends. This communion is bodily, and human, necessary for life itself. Our God worked our salvation through the communion that defines our very nature, our very selves. We are not simply individual souls inhabiting bodies. We are children of God, the image of God embodied, the family of God incarnate through whom the Spirit continues to move. That is what we are encountering, in stark relief, by our absence one from another. Anything less than full communion with one another is not good enough.

On the night before he died for us, Jesus sat down at table with his friends, and shared a meal with them, and washed their feet. He knew he was going to die, he knew that the one who would betray him to death was sitting at that very table. He knew that the twelve disciples would flee when he was put on trial, and that Peter would deny even knowing him. Jesus knew the faults and the sins and the frailty of every single person in the room with him, and yet he sat down to be in full communion with them. He could have gone away, he could have gone into the wilderness to be alone, but even as he awaited arrest he brought his friends with him. Even in the loneliness and fear that Jesus faced, even as he was grieved unto death, Jesus continued to be in relationship with his people, continued to commune with those he loved. They were not perfect sinless people, they could not even stay awake long enough to keep vigil with him as he prayed. They were not good enough. But still, he gave his loving presence to them, he gave his vulnerability to them, he gave his friendship to them. They were not good enough, but even as they betrayed and abandoned him, Jesus named them friends. Even at his death, Jesus was not

left alone, as the women who followed and cared for him kept vigil at his cross and at his tomb. They could not save him, but neither would they leave him, even after he had breathed his last. Even in the silence of death, God's Son was not left alone.

And that is where the scripture leaves us, on this day that begins the holiest week of the year. We are left with a sealed up tomb, with disciples in hiding and the messiah pronounced dead. We are left cut off from the body of the Incarnate Word, both by the stone covering the cave and by our inability to gather together at the altar rail. We are left with more questions than answers, more unknowns than certainties. We are left with not good enough.

But we know that the story isn't over. We know that the tomb will be found empty. We know that the disciples will touch the hands of their Lord, break bread and share food with him again. We know that we will come together again and embrace one another in the name of Christ. We know that we will taste the bread and the wine of the Eucharist again, and we will raise our voices together in song. We know that the body does not stay broken, and that neither will we. What we have in the waiting isn't good enough. But we know what will be resurrected on the other side. What we have is good enough for now.