

Small Talk – April 2 2021
Required Facial Covering When in Public – Day 252
By Michael Small

We are all aware of this saying. There are two things you can be certain about in life – death and taxes. It happens to all of us. I would add birth, life and living, maturation, acquiring our wisdom, aging, and then yes, death!

I would argue that there is more. In the mystery of this life - here is one possibility, some speculation! Let me stir your imagination. Imagine! I think that each person, you, me, and everyone else is born with an intention. One does not enter the world with a blank slate. Each person is unique, wonderfully created – the first and the last of that kind. Some would say each person is intentionally birthed after deciding what it is that he or she wants to experience in this life to come. The intention, the dance, for that person is that she or he will encounter specific life situations, be challenged by them, and learn from them. Of course, the intention can be open ended and flexible. After death there is a gathering with wisdom and others and in a non-judgmental way. There is a wonder-filled gathering. All who gather lovingly speak about learnings and what could have been done differently. After a long and useful conversation there is a pause – time for rest, renewal, reflection, and decision making. When ready, with the support of others, one enters their next life. Mystery! Imagine. I wonder!

On this Friday, this Good Friday, I invite you to reflect upon your birth, becoming, life, and death – I ask, do you really know who you are? Can you identify what is uniquely you, how it is that you are different from everyone else – and the same? Can you set aside your many persona's and slowly reveal, see, glimpse who you are at the very center of your being? Can you embrace the reality that at your very center the divine, the holy resides within you? Incredible! You are not alone. Even at your age, there is more to be birthed, more to be known, more to reveal, more to become. As we move from Good Friday to Easter, do you understand that resurrection is an ongoing process. As we invite the divine, the holy, to inform us, you and I are drawn to our true intention, the intention we were born with. As we emerge there are parts of us, ways of doing and being, that are left behind. Living and dying are a daily process. Be resurrected – dance!

Lastly, I remind you, in these tumultuous days, to remember the new commandment passed on to us from Jesus during that final night. ³⁴ I give you a new commandment: Love one another. And you're to love one another the way I have loved you. ³⁵ This is how all will know that you are my disciples: that you truly love one another." (John 13:34-35) May this love be known in our lives and actions.

I found Rev. Shari Prestemon's prayer offered up on March 30 helpful for this week, the events, and the trauma.

A Prayer for Minneapolis

—Conference Minister Rev. Shari Prestemon

Loving, Servant God, we remember your journey on this blessed Holy Week. You rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, palms waving as you passed, voices shouting their hosannas. You wept over the city, grieving all they did not understand and refused to receive. You experienced the spectrum of emotion: joy, betrayal, brutality, and anguish. You bravely entered into spaces brimming with tensions and anger, doubts, and fears. You found solace in prayer and in community with precious friends. You knew bitter pain and yet focused your unflinching gaze on the fulfillment of promises that beckoned beyond it.

Be present with us now in our own journey of complex emotions and deep suffering. Stand vigil with us in Minneapolis, where hearts tremble and tensions rise as the trial of Derek Chauvin begins. Grant strength and comfort to George Floyd's family in their grief. Lend deep wisdom to the attorneys and judge and jurors. Pour your spirit on all who watch and wait, stomachs churned with anxiety. Hear the prayers we whisper and the prayers for which we cannot even find words. Move us to plead for justice with the courageous hearts of prophets. Instill in us your deep peace. Mingle your tears with ours as we look upon our city's brokenness and sin.

Steadfast One, the whole world watches what happens here now, our collective breath held in nervous waiting. And so, we turn to you, trusting that our story will reflect your story, that our pain too will give way to unstoppable hope. Wrestle new life and possibility from this moment that weighs so heavily upon us. Teach us the lessons we can learn from this journey. And pour upon all who are hurting and afraid your precious blessing, we humbly pray.

Amen.

In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

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