

Session 2 Presentation

From Morning Prayer today –

Jesus answered Philip and Andrew, “Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” --

I need ways to find that inner core of silence. Ways of solitude. The capacity to be still and know God.

And, I need a rhythm in my life of reflection and action, of nurture and service

Our ways of solitude and our rhythms have been disrupted.

So, first, about solitude.

Bishop Peter Eaton wrote about a practice of solitude observed by Rabbi Lionel Blueⁱ – (Aug 11, 2020)

When you go to a new place ... you should first sit down in it, and make friends with the room ...It is important ... to ensure that wherever you are is not just a lodging place, but a little home. Even if it is just for a few days. And the last thing you should do is to say Goodbye to it, for it will have cherished you in the meantime, even if you were scarcely aware of it.

The smoke came to Seattle Thursday night. That’s an addition to the pandemic, the protests, some violence and looting, the need for justice, the polarization. For a time, I was restless and unsettled, I’d jump from one thing to another. The air purifier helps a lot but it’s still not normal. There isn’t much that seems normal right now. I imagine most of us have had that thought—nothing seems normal.

It took me two days before I engaged the rabbi’s advice. I was more shut in than usual. I was using less of the space in the apartment because the air purifier could only handle part of the space.

I did an act of solitude. I went into my bedroom to say goodbye. Mask on, as the air wasn’t as good there. The room was slightly messy, so I pulled the blanket up over the bed and put away some clothing. Then I sat in the chair.

There’s a painting on the wall opposite the chair. Aunt Ruth did it in art school in the late 1930s. A window, with dark brown inside shutters and a windowsill. There are three ceramic pots— the rusty brown and gray ones are on a table in front of the window, the light blue one, is on the sill, it has a bit of ivy coming out of it. I felt quiet, calm.

By the closet there's a print of Julian of Norwich. I was vicar of the Community of Julian of Norwich during the 90s. I visited her cell in England years before that. She spent her life in a space with a small opening into the church so she could attend mass and receive communion and another opening on the street so she could receive supplies and counsel people. For a few minutes, I took the rabbi's counsel—I said goodbye; just for a few days ... I hoped.

The following morning, I sought solitude again. I wanted, in the rabbi's words, to make friends with the room I was now spending all my time in.

I walked around the room; looking—paintings, certificates, books, plants, icons, pictures of family and friends, the gas stove, the sofa I now sleep on, the desk I write at, the air purifier. Memories rose within me. All the things are sacramental—"outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace." They remind me of who I am, of what I love.

That was my experience of solitude – a gift from God, through a rabbi; and me deciding to try it.

The second element of religious life I want to address is oscillation. We gather for worship-we scatter to daily life. We are fed with the Body of Christ so we might be the Body of Christ in the world. We all have ways of physical and emotional renewal that help us engage life's responsibilities and expectations. There are many ways to describe the cycles.

Our cycles have been disrupted.

And even as we may find ways to adapt, something else happens that unsettles them again. In March participating in the Eucharist was changed to live streaming Morning Prayer or the Eucharist, to spiritual communion, or consecrated hosts delivered to your home, or in some places a Zoom mass. And last week my practice of walking for exercise but also for reflection and gaining perspective was spoiled by the smoke.

You will have your own examples. Your own disruptions. And all the ways in which you, your family and friends, and your parish struggled to establish a workable pattern of life. Of facing what had to be faced with as much patience and persistence and courage as possible.

The task is always to make ourselves at home in all circumstances and turn everything that happens to account. I don't think that's about feeling comfortable or happy. That may be outside our circle of influence.

What is in our circle of influence is to place ourselves in the pathways of grace so that in the new circumstances we might, in the words of the Prayer Book, have an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love God, and the gift of joy and wonder in all God's works.ⁱⁱ

I want to spend a few minutes on the Renewal-Apostolate Cycle. It's one way of thinking about what we do in some manner regardless of the circumstances.

The idea is that we need regular renewal of who we are in Christ, in our baptismal identity and purpose. And that we move between those times of renewal and our apostolate in daily life—with family and friends, at work, and as citizens. For example, we are fed by the love of God in the Eucharist so we might be instruments of God’s love in the world.

Because of the pandemic, and other forces, the way we are used to being renewed has changed. I think the church, in most places, has adapted to maintain that part of the Cycle. I don’t think it’s nearly as good as it was in the past. But I do believe that if we had to live with restrictions for another year, we would continue to improve what we are doing.

But whether this goes on for a few more months or another year the places where you and I have “control” are in that first column on the sheet.

We can **accept our dependence upon God** by being open to spiritual guidance as best it can be done during the pandemic—church’s and monasteries are offering formation programs; we can engage the spiritual wisdom of our tradition by doing more reading; we can meet with others in the parish for mutual spiritual guidance.

We can continue to **accept responsibility for our own spiritual life** by maintain our spiritual discipline as best we can. And that will mean adapting and trying new things. We could start saying Morning Prayer each day. If we need more solitude, we can claim the time.

And, finally, we can **accept our interdependence with others in the church**. Even if it is out of just duty, we can join in the Sunday worship of our parish. If there is a Zoom coffee hour we can participate.

The task is always “to make ourselves at home in all circumstances and able to turn everything that happens to account.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Robert A. Gallagher, OA

Resources below

The Renewal-Apostolate Cycle

Cycles

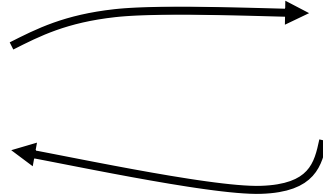
Evelyn Underhill: for your reflection

The Renewal – Apostolate Cycle

The Renewal - Apostolate Cycle is a way of describing a central dynamic of Christian life. The Cycle focuses our attention on the Christian’s movement between being renewed in baptismal identity and purpose and living as instruments of God’s love and grace in daily life. The Cycle is interested in both the individual’s movement and in the ways in which the parish church supports and facilitates that movement. This is the primary task of any parish church.

RENEWAL

Renewal in baptismal identity and purpose in worship, study and being equipped, for Christian action



APOSTOLATE

Participation in the work of Christ in service, evangelization and stewardship

In areas of:

- Workplace
- Family & Friends
- Civic Life
- Church

A Cycle

The cycle is between a conscious and intentional attention to God, prayer life, our relationships, Christian formation **and** a subconscious reliance upon God as members of the Body of Christ, in the workplace, family, civic life and congregational life.

In that Cycle:

We need:

To accept our dependence on God

To accept responsibility for ordering our spiritual life

To accept our interdependence with others in the Church

Which is helped by:

Openness to spiritual guidance

Establishing a rule of life

Life in Christian community, a parish church

Which the parish helps by:

An emphasis in its life on worship; nothing comes before the Eucharist and Daily Office. Also, more attention to formation and spiritual growth than other programs or ministries.

Offering programs and guidance in creating, experimenting with, and revising a spiritual discipline.

Being a healthy and faithful parish church and by helping people relate to the parish community in ways appropriate to their personality and the parish’s capacities.

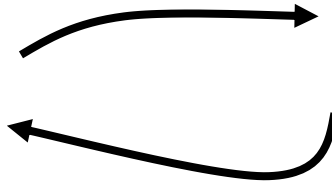
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Cycles

We all have various cycles and rhythms of our life. On Sunday we participate in the Eucharist and we return to our daily life. We may have rhythms of exercise and rest. Here are a few examples of possible cycles.

RENEWAL

Renewal in baptismal identity and purpose



APOSTOLATE

Participation in the work of Christ

Dependent on God

On God and the pathways- Bible, sacraments, priest

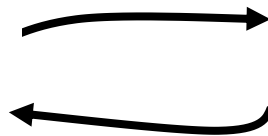


Dependent on what's within

Having what I need to make responsible decisions in the world

Solitude

Learning to be with God in silence; developing an inner core of silence



Inner core of silence

Authentic ministry and a practical theology

Physical & emotional renewal



Life's expectations and demands

Evelyn Underhill: for your reflection

For the fully Christian life is a Eucharistic life: that is, a natural life conformed to the pattern of Jesus, given in its wholeness to God, laid on His altar as a sacrifice of love, and consecrated, transformed by His inpouring life, to be used to give life and food to other souls.

We are to be transformed, consecrated, made sacred to his creative purpose; and so fulfill the meaning of our life.

You are the Body of Christ....That is to say; in you and through you the method and work of the Incarnation must go forward. You are meant to incarnate in your lives the themes of your adoration. You are to be taken, consecrated, broken, and made a means of grace; vehicles of the Eternal Charity.

Consecration is a creative act. It does not merely mean taking something that is already complete in itself, and applying it unchanged to a new purpose; but making it that which indeed it should be, and has not yet become.

ⁱ Reflection, Bishop Peter Eaton, August 11, 2020, *A British rabbi whose books I have loved over the years, the late Rabbi Lionel Blue, always used to advise that when you go to a new place, for a holiday or a retreat, you should first sit down in it, and make friends with the room, the convent, or the house – whatever the accommodation might be. It is important, he would counsel, to ensure that wherever you are is not just a lodging place, but a little home. Even if it is just for a few days. And the last thing you should do is to say Goodbye to it, for it will have cherished you in the meantime, even if you were scarcely aware of it.*

I realise that such an attitude, such a possibility, is a privilege. For so many, these months of enforced isolation have been frightful, with no good issue out of it.

ⁱⁱ Holy Baptism, Book of Common Prayer, p. 308.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon *these* your servants the forgiveness of sin, and have raised *them* to the new life of grace. Sustain *them*, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give *them* an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. *Amen.*

ⁱⁱⁱ Father Richard Benson, SSJE *We must be as religious cherishing a habit of at once jumping into our place and finding ourselves at home in it, just as much at home there is anywhere else. ... The religious life is not to be a dreamy dissatisfaction with the present state of things, it is not to be a mere not knowing what to do next, because things about us are as they are, but it is the consciousness of being able to make ourselves at home under all circumstances and able to turn everything that happens to account. This is what the religious should be — ready; ready but not fussy.*