

Rev. George Miller
Feb 2, 2025
Luke 6:1-16

Once at Bible Study, Donovan shared an idea - "As people discovered Jesus, he discovers himself."

This made me think- "As we discover Jesus, we discover ourselves."

May this message be one in which we hear how Christ encourages us to discover our best self.

Today's reading involves sacred days, actions of faith, disagreements, controversy, and chances for learning, events that appear whenever two or more are gathered to explore what it means to be a person or body of faith.

Today's reading can apply to the controversy and questions that arose since the announcement of my Installation being postponed.

Let us seek the presence of the Holy Spirit as we journey in discovering the why, how and the where to go...

...First, let's discuss a little about me. Back when the Search Committee met with me on January 19, 2024, it was nothing but love and possibility.

The follow-up interview, the initial visit, the trial sermon, all rich with joy and unlimitedness.

Then the unexpected happened- I underestimated how difficult it would be to move from a community, Cozy Cottage, friends, and a boyfriend that I saw as my "forever person."

Homesickness crept in; intense.

Add to that the Election, the weather, with rains resulting in a watery basement, a unique snowstorm, lingering gray skies, long dark nights.

Thank God for all those people who care and have shown their love.

Then, St. Lucas- the conflicts, disagreements, issues that have gone on for years, allowing space for and acceptance of behaviors that aren't always the best way of being.

My first week, my first day, folks let these stories be known.

I then witnessed meetings in which someone raised their voice, bullied another. E-mails in which things I said were either misrepresented, misunderstood, or filled with lies.

Add to this the issues with Saturday Night worship, it felt like hosting a festive, celebratory Installation did not feel appropriate...for now.

“For now” is the key word, because as people of Christian Faith, rooted in the stories of our Hebrew Ancestors, we know that our God is a God who is full of surprises, possibilities, and ways of transforming the bleakest moment into an era of jubilation.

That’s what Resurrection and Easter are about.

So, now that we’ve discussed this, what do we do?

We take a page from today’s reading- moving forward, just as Jesus and the disciples did in the field, finding ways to rest and be nourished.

We honor our worship space and building just as Jesus did- caring for those in need; acts of healing.

What do we do? Just as Jesus called the disciples, we find ways to build upon, grow, surround ourselves with folk who care about the Good News- transformation, Resurrection, healing.

As we experienced in today’s reading, controversy and conflict will always exist; the entire ministry of Jesus is surrounded by controversy.

Here is a part that is so affirming- Jesus used those moments to teach a lesson and encourage deep thought.

Jesus addresses folks with a question about doing good and saving a life, restoring a person to wellness.

By responding this way, Jesus allows folk the chance to learn, grow, think in ways that are life affirming.

Today we begin our Stewardship Campaign- Love Grows Here; which started off as a statement.

How does Love Grow Here? The Yellow Bags going to Feed My People, our work with Habitat for Humanity, our youth as they prepare to travel to Back Bay Mission.

“Love Grows Here” is also a Prophetic statement.

It is a reminder of why we do what we do, calling us to new ways, brave ways, healthy ways to address and be honest about our conflicts and disagreements.

How does Love Grow Here? By creating space to discuss the things that affect us- loss, fear, grief, moving forward while honoring the past, while not being trapped in it.

“Love Grows Here” means that we are prophetically called to nourish and care for the spiritual soil we have been entrusted with by God.

We start by acknowledging and addressing the things that can choke out or impede the seeds of hope and possibilities we are planting.

We find ways to water the soil, give it sun, through worship, song, acts of compassion, hospitality, kind words, words of forgiveness, acts of grace.

Another important part is allowing time of rest, sabbath, rejuvenation.

We discern the seeds we feel called to plant. Some seeds already exist- the ONA Committee, the Pastoral Care provided through Pastor Janet and the Caring Committee, the involvement and appreciation of our youth.

Friends- there is no denying that we are in a time of transition.

It could be long; messy. It will not end all disagreements and conflicts, nor the issues I personally face.

But if we do the work, if we find ways to best communicate with each other, have the honest conversations, be less afraid and more brave to deal with conflict, face disagreements, pray, and to weather the different storms that come our way, we can experience true transformation.

When we do this, we can walk as the disciples with Jesus in the grainfield.

We can experience nets being raised up full of fish.

We can experience the joy of Resurrection and new beginnings.

Let us journey together, planting those seeds, tending the soil, discuss what needs to be discussed, so that we can say with all certainty that "Love Grows Here."

For that, let us say "Amen."