

LENTEN SERIES 3: A SUMMARY by Brenda Wallace

Scripture Readings: Isaiah 43:18-19
 Luke 10: 38-42
 Ephesians 4: 26; 4: 31-32
 Philippians 3: 13-14; 4: 6-7

Part One: THE FAST LANE (REFLECTION BY REV. PEGGY MCDONAGH, MARCH 24, 2019)

Rev. Peggy has been guiding us through a Lenten practice of fasting from hurry and worry. A resource for her has been Carl Honoré's book *In Praise of Slow*. The first segment of her reflection focussed on what is going on in the world regarding busyness and the second segment considers practices that clear the clutter and chaos out of our lives.

Quoting Gandhi, "There is more to life than increasing its speed," she acknowledged that, according to Honoré, modern society is addicted to speed. A statistic: average smart phone users touch their gadgets 2,617 times a day. She went on to say that in the Japanese language Karoshi (death by overwork) refers to, among other things, "24-hour day care programs for parents too busy to raise their children."

A negative is that more and more people are using "potent stimulants" and Rev. Peggy related that "Drowsiness causes more accidents than alcohol and the UN predicts that drowsiness will be the third leading cause of death in the world by 2020... The health consequences leave us suffering from burnout, anxiety, mental illness and suicide. More importantly, we are losing real connections with our selves, with others and with the world. As Honoré says, "All the things that bind us together and make life worth living - community, family, friendship - thrive on ... time."

"There is more to life than increasing its speed."

Part Two: LETTING GO OF THE CLUTTER AND THE CHAOS

Rev. Peggy reflected on ancient traditions of welcoming the seasons and considered a need of people today who "hunger for an encounter with something more significant than their busy and overwhelming lives. People long to slow the pace, to reconnect, to play and enjoy life and to live lives

that are not accelerating out of control but evolving into higher expressions of compassion and love.”

She reminded us that “the season of Lent gives us the opportunity to engage the spiritual practice of letting go of clutter and chaos.” It is about “freeing ourselves from the accumulation of stuff and slowing down our “churning minds that seem to mirror the speed of life.”

In the story of Martha and Mary, Mary chose the “right” thing while Martha kept busy- missing out on the chance to spend valuable time with Jesus. Likewise the wealthy young man couldn’t let go of his riches. The disciples tried to keep children and women away from Jesus for which they were rebuked. “Let go of power to clear space for God’s grace,” was Rev. Peggy’s advice.

Worrying doesn’t make a difference. Rather let go, let be and things will work out. “When we face challenging situations of life, we have two options for dealing with the emotions that arise. ‘You either resist them and wish them to be another way, or you can accept your situation and change the way you feel about it. Letting go means letting life be by allowing tough feelings to rise, letting them deliver their message and then watching them be replaced by new feelings.’” (Jill Babcock).

“In the space created we can practise acceptance, forgiveness, open-mindedness, patience and remain realistic in a world that so easily blinds us to what is real. What is real is peace, love, joy, well-being and human connections. This Lent may you have the courage to let go of some clutter and chaos and, in so doing, to slow the pace, to calm your spirit, to change your perspective, to birth new life as you reconnect with yourself and an unhurried God. May this be so for us all.”