

Reflection

May 1, 2022

From Betty Schultze

A few of us gather every Tuesday to do Lecto Divina, a spiritual practice where we reflect together on the gospel that we will hear the following Sunday in Church. In this practice the gospel is read three times. After the first reading we find a word or a short phrase that speaks to us and share it with the group. After the second reading we identify where the passage touches our lives today and share that with the group; after that we read it a third and last time, and ask ourselves "From what I've heard and shared, what do I believe God wants me to do or be? Is God inviting me to change in any way?" We close with a prayer, usually the Lord's Prayer. This has become a highlight of my week, a chance to be contemplative, do respectful listening and consider what the Lord asks of me. Pat and I decided to use it as the format for our reflection today. I considered both today's readings.

Acts 9-

The word that comes to me is "breathing". I think it resonates with me because this passage is literally breathtaking. Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus is not only a breath taking conversion story, but Saul's conversion and the ministry that follows, breathes life into the very existence of the Christian Church.

The phrase "something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again," has a lot to say to me right now. My world and probably yours is blinding us with "something like scales"; all the reasons that people choose actions that make Christ call out, "Why do you persecute or a word that I like better "hurt" me?" Some of my personal scales seem like pretty small stuff; being concerned about appearances, choosing to spend time watching Netflix over maintaining friendships, helping others, taking time to relate to my grandchildren. On a global level, those scales are life-threatening. We are truly blinded by fake news, economic gains over what is best for our planet, even maintaining a "status quo" that we find comfortable, rather than recognizing and embracing that the world of yesterday doesn't work in 2022. For each of us, we need to identify what our "scales" are and know that we need to remove them in order to see. And what we have to see is a better, more fulfilled life in Christ's world.

When I consider "from what I've heard and shared, what do I believe God wants me to do or be, I think I really need to think about how I am hurting Jesus by being blind to what it really means to be a disciple of his. I need to open my eyes, and listen respectfully to others, read more, pray more so that I am sure of the road I am on. I need to continue to do Lecto Divina with the wise women I share that experience with now, I need to learn more about how to live responsibly and compassionately in the world. I need to be sensitive to all my "blind spots" that keep me from being what God wants me to be.

John 21

"Right" is the word that comes to me in this passage of the resurrected Christ appearing to his disciples, standing on the shore, urging them to throw their net on the right side of the boat. Maybe as a teacher of young children, I see checkmarks beside all the answers that are right, and exes beside the answers that are wrong, but right is an important word for me....I am sometimes in a quandary over what is the "right" thing to do. Here, "right" is a direction but I appreciate its double meaning. When the fishermen put their nets on the right side of the boat they catch many fish. The promise is that when I do something right people will be fed, cherished, and there is a reward in that.

When Jesus says "Feed my lambs." That resonates with me. On one hand I recognize that it is Christ calling Peter to ministry, to feed the young and the old with the good news of Christ's message to the world, but it is also the universal appeal to care for our young ones. Perhaps because I am a grandmother of 9 children, I struggle with how to be a good influence in their lives. I think we have a responsibility as members of Christ Church Gabriola to "feed my lambs", not perhaps just children, but our whole community; to not only make soup, but provide a venue for education and practice on spiritual matters, to discuss global issues that affect us all, to become more of a hub where we truly "feed" those who are thirsty for a more spiritual, well-balanced sane way of life.

What is it that God wants me to do or be? I think he wants me to fish on the right side of the boat, I think he wants me to break bread with others cheerfully, believing always that there will be plenty; plenty being love, compassion and kindness. I think he is showing me that maybe we need to look at new ways is to feed people with what they truly need. We need to spark the God that is in all of us, to see the light when the divine enters our life, to bring people hope, compassion, and a way forward in an anxious world. Jesus' plea to Peter is one we can all respond to.