

Greetings in the name all that is holy and magnificent to behold,

SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 46:10 (NIV) – Larger reading: Psalm 46:1-11

“He says, ‘Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.’”

STORY:

When a little girl had finished her evening prayers, she remained at her bedside for some time. Finally her mother told her to get into bed. “I was just waiting,” the girl protested, “to see if God had anything to say to me.”

OBSERVATION:

Quiet is an endangered species in our day. We carry our cell phones everywhere we go so that we can be in constant contact with our “people.” A gentleman, sitting in front of me at the movies some time ago, checked his cell phone at least three times during the show. What did we do before we had cell phones? I must confess that I’m guilty ... I just seem lost without it. Why do we have this inner need to be in constant contact with others? Are we afraid that we might miss out on something? Is our mundane conversations with others so drastic to our existence that we have to take them no matter who we are with or in what setting they might come to us? Remember when a phone conversation was a private matter and wasn’t shared with everybody within earshot of us? Quiet is an endangered species.

First thing we do when we return home is turn on the TV. And, in the car the radio never gets turned off. Today, the car radios are so loud that we can hear what the fellow two cars away is listening to. Truly, quiet is an endangered species. I’ve even heard of people who keep their radios on while they sleep or, like a shut-in in my first parish, kept the TV blaring during his sleep cycle. Noise bombards us at every turn. We have no quiet time any longer. In an earlier day one would walk to town, walk to church, walk to our nearest neighbor (at least a half a mile away). Each walk would give a person an opportunity to get lost in their own thoughts or simply to be quiet and allow God to speak to the heart. Now, we jump into a car, the radio is on and silence has become an endangered species.

In a recent article, “A Walk of Weeks for Absolution,” by Maya Nasson I read about a pilgrimage of 500 miles that can take six to eight weeks to complete. It is in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. It is a pilgrimage trail that has existed for over a 1,000 years. The purpose is not to see how fast one can backpack along this pathway, but to simply walk surrounded by the silence of nature ... to be quiet ... to get reconnected with God ... to “be still and know that I am God” as Psalm 46:10 reads. The Message says it this way: “Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God, above politics, above everything.” This pilgrimage ends at the Cathedral of St. James as the pilgrims attend a mass – a celebration of Christ. They have reconnected to the Divine as they shut out the noise of our modern society.

One of my favorite comic strips is “Rose is Rose” by Pat Brady and Don Wimmer. One Sunday the strip has Rose walking with her cell phone in hand. The cell phone kept showing the bars until finally it read, “No service” at which point Rose thinks, “Sometimes you have to lose the signal to get the message!” A smile lights up Rose’s face. She is at peace. She is by herself or is she? May we be so lucky to find the solitude of a quiet place or a “thinking spot” or a pilgrim’s walk when we can pull away from the noise of our world and rediscover God’s world, allowing our inner spiritual self to find the peace of God’s presence ... to hear once again God’s voice in our inner being ... to “be still and know that (he) is God.”

QUOTE:

“Out in front of us is the drama of men and of nations, seething, struggling, laboring, dying...but within the silences of the souls of men an eternal drama is ever being enacted. On the outcome of this inner drama rests ultimately, the outer pageant of history.” - Thomas Kelly

PRAYER:

The constant noise drowns you out, Oh, God. For that I am deeply sorry. I need to be for disciplined in finding quiet time alone with you. Can you assist me with a gentle nudge or a soft whisper? I hope so, because I really do need, desperately, to be alone with you for strength for my pilgrimage of faith. In the name of Jesus who was constantly withdrawing to the mountains to be alone with you, I pray. Amen

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim
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Sermon: “Looking for Signs” – Luke 21:25-28
Join us today in the sanctuary at 10:30 for worship
OR on FaceBook – Manatee United Methodist Church
OR on YouTube – No Facebook account needed
<https://youtu.be/S7uymcsqjbk>