

A HOLY WEEK PILGRIMAGE

This year, due to a global COVID-19 pandemic, as we are living in a world of physical distancing, we are pursuing God's world of spiritual presencing more closely. One way to pursue God's world of spiritual presencing is the practice of pilgrimage.

A PILGRIMAGE is a journey to a place of spiritual significance. A pilgrimage may take you to a place where people have experienced Transcendent Mystery in the past. A pilgrimage is always a journey of intentional spiritual openness in which you allow yourself to will the will of God.

Each day, through Holy Week, please use the information provided to explore God's presence and guidance in your life as you seek to mature in Active Faith.



IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, those ages in which sacred scriptures were written and compiled, human beings described their spiritual experience of a presence which was immortal – beyond mortal. This Transcendent Mystery was named God, and compared to additional natural experiences which were more tangible: wind, stars, soil, storms, floods, droughts, mountains, valleys, etc. Without a scientific lens through which to perceive human experience, it seems as if people of long ago experienced God everywhere.

In contrast, residents of massive cities in the twenty-first century seem to have difficulty experiencing God as Transcendent Mystery or Spiritual Presence anywhere. We live in concrete canyons equipped with the knowledge science offers, yet can be spiritually blind. We understand General Omar Bradley who reflected on World War II saying, “We grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount...The world has achieved brilliance without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living. We’ve learned how to destroy, but not to create; how to waste, but not to build; how to kill men, but not how to save them; how to die, but seldom how to live.”

During this Holy Week, while the world is experiencing physical distancing, let us practice spiritual “presencing.” Let us go on a pilgrimage exploring inner space and see how we are shaped to touch the outer world through the life of Jesus Christ whose footprints we follow.

St. John's Baptist Church

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Holy Week Resources Provided by Dennis W. Foust, Senior Minister

MONDAY, APRIL 6th, 2020

Prayer

Gospel of Mark 11:15-19



Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. Jesus was teaching and saying, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

Jesus' actions and teachings were always integrated and purposeful. In his actions to close down the moneychangers, their investors and business partners, he accused them of de-emphasizing prayer. They were making money by abusing worship of The Living God and exploiting the sacrificial system, Jesus teaches that injustice is always wrong; even – or especially – when it is excused by religious people who suggest they are fulfilling religious traditions or intentions. Injustice is always ungodly. Jesus condemns any and all collaborations between religious practices and economic victimization. Worship requires humility and commitment. Prayer is the primary work of God's people.

QUESTION:

If Jesus walked through the temple of your life, would he need to clear away anything to make prayer your primary purpose?

HYMN:

Take Time to Be Holy (by W.D. Longstaff, 1882)

Take time to be holy, speak often with God;
Abide in God always, and feed on God's Word.
Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,
Forgetting in nothing God's blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret, with the Lord alone.

By following Jesus, like him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct, his likeness shall see.

Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul,
Each thought and each motive beneath God's control.
Be humble in spirit, seek peace from above,
Thus led by God's Spirit, transformed in God's love.

PRAYER:

Living God, as we take these initial steps into Holy Week, show us how to prioritize prayer. Restore in us a desire to be still before You. Reconcile us to deeper prayerful living, focused time with You that ignites, inspires and informs our active faith. Like Moses, we stand barefoot before Your Presence. You are like a burning bush offering eternal light and undiminished power. AMEN

(William James in *Varieties of Religious Experience*: "We and God have business with each other; and in opening ourselves to God's influence our deepest destiny is fulfilled.")