

BUC COFFEE & CHAT

Welcome friends. This edition of our newsletter will focus on our journey through Lent.
Pour yourself a cup of coffee and let's chat.



A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR Wilderness Journeys



Before I had kids of my own, I moved to Kelowna and joined the Rowing Club there.

Early one Saturday morning I took a single scull out for a morning row. It was such a beautiful day. The sun was turning everything to glorious colors, the water was calm and the air was still. No one else was on the water as far as my eye could see, and I was in a rhythm.



Stroke, stroke... my oars going through the water, moving me along. The noise of cars on the bridge fades away

Stroke, stroke... the ache in my tired muscles is long forgotten and a new energy surfaces

Stroke, stroke... I am one with the boat and it's rhythm takes me far away

When you're in those moments- "in the groove" - time loses all meaning, and all other thoughts drop away. It feels like a perfect moment.

After a fair bit of time had passed, I began to tire, so I took note of my surroundings. It was

time to turn the boat around and head for home. As I slowed the boat and began my turn, I looked up and out, and suddenly realized I had gone much farther than I had planned.

Although I thoroughly scanned the shoreline, I could not see any sign of the rowing club.

I looked down at the water and thought about how deep it was, how vast it seemed compared to my tiny shell of a boat,

and the fact that I couldn't see the bottom. Some waves had come up and were rocking the boat, and I felt my muscles beginning to ache a bit from the effort.

A tiny seed of fear sat in the back of my mind...

In the end I just had to stay calm and keep going. I made it back to the safety of the rowing club, in good health and with a funny story to tell.

We have all had times we would describe as wilderness journeys, times when we have not

been able to see the beginning or end of the path. Waiting for clarity can be challenging.

Dear God, please just show me what you want me to do, and I'll do it.

Put your hand up if you've ever pleaded with God to just let you know what to do. I know I have.

I've been considering those times of uncertainty for quite a while now, and have come to embrace "the wilderness" as an integral and even vital part of my journey.

The wilderness has no less value or beauty than the parts of the path with breathtaking vistas and beautiful sunsets. Thick forests, steep climbs, and deep water all teach us to use all of our senses, and to trust. It also give us the blessed opportunity for stillness.

It's a lot like the tulip bulbs planted in the autumn. The cold and snow of winter may not look like they're doing much to bring on the spring or the beauty of blossoming flowers, but without this time of nurturing in the cold, damp soil, the tulips wouldn't have the nutrients they needed to bloom again.

I'm working at making peace with this concept, however, it doesn't mean I don't complain about the loose rocks, blisters on my heel, the sharp or unexpected turns, the lack of signage

and the other travellers on the path. I get irritable when my GPS keeps re-routing due to construction, and I'm guilty of impatience with the process, grumbling, "Are we there yet?!"

In spite of my occasional impatience with the process, I am learning to use this time to practice stillness. It is in those moments when I am still, that I am learning to listen for God's voice and signs of God's presence in my days.

I am being prepared and nourished for when it is my time to bloom again.

This Lent I pray for you, dear friends:

May your wilderness journeys be embraced as beautiful times of growth

May you sit with the discomfort that sometimes accompanies growth

May you be at peace with the damp darkness you're in, and know that it is a place to rest and renew, so that you may journey again.

May you hear the voice of God and know that your path is moving you closer to Easter and Alleluia- even when you do not see the way.

Blessings,

Angela Wigglesworth



God of the journey,
we wander through the wilderness hoping to find what we are searching for.
As we search, may we be strengthened by your presence;
our water in the desert, our rainbow after the storm.

—a prayer from *Why I Believe: Daily Devotions on Faith & Discipleship* (UCPH, 2017)

WHERE WERE YOU?

In the Lenten book *Faithfully Yours: Letters for the Wondering*, Bri-Anne Swan reflects on the perennial question, “God, where were you?”



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O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? — Habakkuk 1:1-2

Dear Habakkuk,

I felt your spirit in a young boy. He was about 12 years old, sitting with his mother and sister, surrounded by a dozen others from the neighbourhood. We were lighting candles and taking turns first sitting in silence and then sharing words of loss and lament.

Most of those gathered had ties to Sri Lanka and had family members who were either killed or injured during the 2019 Easter Morning bombings that shook both the country and the world. The boy was quite small. Yet in his sorrow, he seemed much older than his age. Perhaps that is the way of young prophets.

“I just don’t understand,” he said. “Why did this happen? Why does this keep happening? Why do people keep killing each other? Why did they do it where we go to talk to God?”

The boy then looked skywards. In confusion and indignation he cried out, “God, where were you?”

There is a certain courage in voicing doubt and questioning God. O Habakkuk, your

cry and your song are timeless. It’s both a comfort and a source of heartbreak. For thousands of years, these perennial questions continue to tear at our souls in times of violence and grief. And yet, 2,600 years later, we’re still left without any easy answers.

Where is God when a school full of children are kidnapped and enslaved? Where is God when a terrorist begins shooting worshippers at a mosque? Where is God when a church is bombed to the ground?

Sometimes the questions of the heart cannot be answered with words alone. There is, indeed, courage in questioning God. There is also courage in maintaining faith, despite doubt and despite not entirely understanding how the Spirit moves through our days and our lives.

Our young prophet concluded his questioning with a simple shrug: “I just don’t get it.” But then he sang a prayer he’d learned in school. He sang it over and over again. And because he sang, we could all sing with him — confused and grieving, but faithfully together.

My friend, your fiery spirit lives on.

In timeless solidarity,
Bri-anne

— Bri-anne Swan is the Community Minister with Living Presence Ministry in East Gwillimbury, ON and a candidate for Diaconal Ministry. She is a spiritual companion to men on Texas’ death row, journeying with them as they move toward their executions. In addition to her ministry role, Bri-anne is a professional singer/songwriter and composer with three released albums to date.

LENT is about

@aNunsLife
#Lenticipation

**BECOMING,
DOING, and
CHANGING,
WHATEVER IT IS
THAT IS BLOCKING
THE FULLNESS OF LIFE
IN US RIGHT NOW.**

-- Sister Joan Chittister, OSB

Create a Lenten Candle Wreath or Cross

Your family can use a Lenten wreath or cross featuring five purple candles and one rose candle. You may choose to use a commercial Lenten cross or create your own. One Lenten tradition prunes boughs from the family Christmas tree. These are then used to create a Lenten wreath.



Offer a Prayer and Kind Word

The day's challenge is for each family member to say a prayer for someone they see in need.

Take a Virtual Tour of Jerusalem

Your family can watch a virtual tour of Jerusalem. Encourage your family to discuss the various places presented in the virtual tour and explore each significant landmark more in depth.

Bake Hot Cross Buns



When you get closer to the end of Lent, you may want to bake hot cross buns. This traditional Lenten food is served at the end of the Lenten season. The cross on the bun symbolizes the crucifixion of Christ. The spices that are used in making the bun represent the ones used in preparing his body for burial.



As Lent is the time for greater love, listen to Jesus' thirst... 'Repent and believe' Jesus tells us. What are we to repent? Our indifference, our hardness of heart. What are we to believe? Jesus thirsts even now, in your heart and in the poor — He knows your weakness. He wants only your love, wants only the chance to love you.

—St. Teresa of Calcutta

Write one letter of gratitude each day:

Take on a 40-day gratitude challenge and write one thank-you note, text, or email each day.



TRY GIVING UP SOME OF THESE HABITS FOR LENT:

Using your phone at dinner

It's easy to mindlessly scroll through your phone when you're eating. But even if you're eating by yourself, putting down your phone can help you enjoy your meal more.

Skipping your doctors' appointments

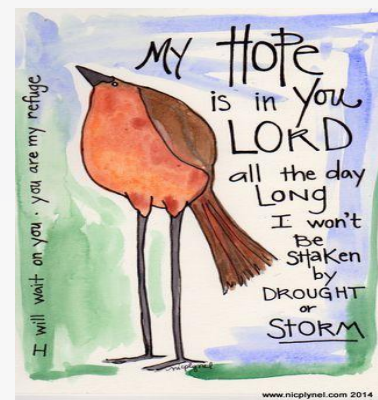
A yearly check-up with your primary physician is a must, as is going to the dentist and getting your vision check. It's important to stop putting off these appointments, especially if something is bothering you.

Not catching up with loved ones

During the daily grind, it's easy to not check-in on the ones we love. Take time every day to send someone you care about a quick text or give them a call to make sure they're doing okay.

Not offering forgiveness

It's one of the hardest things to do, but offering forgiveness to someone who has hurt you can do wonders for not just them, but also you. It's also important you're forgiving yourself.



Try this Lenten Finger Labyrinth Prayer

Using the labyrinth on the following page, and following the instructions below, spend time reflecting on the questions. As you journey through the labyrinth, try to be aware of God's presence with and within you.

God almighty,
holy and loving one,
eternal, ever-present one,
walk with us.
Earth maker, life giver,
pain bearer,
lover of our souls,
walk with us.
Through all the twists
and turns of life,
when clouds obscure the way,
walk with us.
When what once seemed close
now looks so far away,
walk with us.
Light bringer, faith builder,
justice bringer,
walk with us,
until we trust in you,
and walk the path
that leads to the centre
of your love.
Christine Sine
<http://godspace-msa.com>



Sit in a quiet place with your hands in your lap, palms facing upward. Take a few breaths in and out until you feel at peace in your soul.

Recite the prayer above several times and relax into the presence of God

Form a question you are grappling with or use the one I suggested during Lent *What am I afraid of?* Place a finger from your non-dominant hand at the entrance to the labyrinth. Prayerfully ask your question. Invite the holy spirit of God to guide and instruct you on your journey.

Trace the circuit with your finger. Stay open to whatever presents itself: feelings, sensations, memories, ideas. Pause at any time to breathe, focus on a thought or memory or just to relax into the labyrinth and your questioning. At the center of the labyrinth, sense your connection to your own center and to the centering presence of God. Acknowledge the Holy Spirit, the heavenly counselor directing your thoughts and exploration. Relax, prayer, sing. Repeat your question and wait on the Holy Spirit to guide you.

Trace your way out, staying open to whatever comes up for you. Now you might like to change your question to *What would I do if I was not afraid?* When your walk is done, place both hands on the labyrinth, take some deep breaths in and out, and give thanks to God for whatever you learned and experienced.





A Prayer for Ukraine

God of peace and justice,
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.
We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment and compassion
to guide their decisions.
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
Amen.

Archbishop Justin Welby
Archbishop Stephen Cottrell

