

Communion Meditation – May 16/10

Acts 16: 16 – OPEN DOORS

Let me tell you about an experience I had yesterday.

I had a sermon done for today (sort of) but then I received an email. One of those forwards...you know? Usually I delete them but this time I opened it. It was from a friend, and the subject line said "I wish I had the courage to say this".

When I opened it, it was a horrible blast against immigrants, essentially saying if you can't learn to speak our language (singular) and adopt our religion and customs, go back to where you came from". It was vile. It made me angry...and sad. It was like hearing a door slammed in someone's face

During the week, I've had some other conversations too....situations in churches, and in families, where doors were being closed. Slammed, in some cases. Painful, painful experiences.

I only have one thing to say this morning: WHERE THE RISEN CHRIST IS, DOORS OPEN.

Doors open.

The mark, the work, the sign of the work of the Risen Christ – of the Spirit – of life's victory over death, is an open door.

Today in the Acts reading, an earthquake breaks open the prison doors

And even more miraculous,

Jailer and jailed then join in an act of hospitality and friendship, compassion and healing, that would have been unthinkable without the power of God.

In the book of Revelation, one of the most powerful images is of the Holy City – it has 12 gates....they are always open by day AND THERE IS NO NIGHT THERE.

And open door.

Archetypal, intuitively accessible, universal symbol of the Divine, of the Spirit, of the will and way of God.

An open door.

Before he died, Jesus prayed for us. He prayed two things. That we would love one another and that we would be one.

The door to that vision, to making it real – the door to that oneness is open for us.

Scripture is one door

The sacrament we're about to share is another

And so is memory.

The plaque that Fred showed us this morning brings back so many memories...I was watching your faces as he talked about the day the church burned...and I could see the emotions in your face as you remembered that time. Don and Isabel's presence too....memories.

Today I invite you into deep memory....the kind that leads to an open door; a door that will bring us to oneness – the unity that is God's dream and Jesus' prayer for us.

More than once this week I talked with people who are experiencing closed doors in relationships. In telling me about it, about the hard situations, they went back in time, telling the story of how it got to this – how it all had happened.

And in doing that, they eventually went back as well to happier times, to memories that helped them know that the person they are presently estranged from wasn't always this way; wasn't only the person they are having trouble with today. There is more to that person than this....there was a time when they laughed together; there was a time when this person was a child, when they cried themselves to sleep, when they did something kind....memory was the door that opened to a oneness that can be forgotten when painful things are happening.

Memory was the door – and it also opened a door. Not to a fairy tale ending, not that. But to a gentler, more complete feel for the situation and for the people. Do you know what I mean?

Sometimes at bedsides, or in family rooms on a palliative care unit, memories start to emerge. Stories get told, often there is laughter and healing begins, and a door is opened.

The scriptures invite us to remember. Remember what?

Remember that we are one.

This table invites us to remember. All of us together at the table. That's Jesus' prayer, like a mom who wants nothing more than for all her kids to get along and sit at the table without fighting, right? Just love each other; just let's have dinner without kicking each other under the table.

There was a time when we were a happy family, the memory says. We used to be happy together;

Whether that memory is expressed in the language of scripture: and we remember a garden, and a creator who formed us all from clay; all of us from the same stuff....

Or whether the memory is expressed in the language of science...a big bang that sent out blasts of stardust from which we are all formed....

It's the same memory. Once, we were One. We still are One. And we remember forward to a city where we'll all be together, where everyone will be welcome; where the gates are always open and there is more than one way in. 12 open gates....

When we remember that we are one, how dare we treat one another with anything less than the full dignity and respect and open doors that are our inheritance?

Today I invite you out of whatever amnesia is yours\and pray for you the oneness of full memory\your own history, the history of your family\and the spiritual roots that form our family of faith.

Most of all I wish for you open doors.

There is a door right here and right now\Step through,

Come to the Table of life.

Amen.