

WORLD WIDE COMMUNION – TELL ME AGAIN

As you know I just came back from a trip to Germany. One of the best things about that trip was being with my nephew Ryan and his wife Heather and their unborn daughter.

One of the things about our family dynamic (families are so funny don't you find???) Anyway, one of the things about our current family dynamic is that I am now the oldest. The carrier of the memory and the one with the best chance of remembering the stories that our parents and grandparents told.

Ryan loves to hear stories. He's 25 now. Bill, my brother, his dad, is not one to tell stories, and when Ryan was little, he was hungry for them. When he was born, (the first of that generation to be born) Nate and I bought him a children's Bible and on our yearly visits he'd ask that we read to him. Once when he was 4 they picked me up at the airport and Ryan said "mommy got the Bible down out of the closet when you were coming!"

He loved to hear the Bible stories and he loved to hear the family stories. Tell me again he'd say. Tell me about the time Daniel was in the lions' den. Tell me about the time Papa was in the army. Tell me about when Nanny and Papa got married....

I remember that myself. Mom and dad had a shoe box full of pictures and it was a delightful rainy day thing to get them down and hear mom tell me all over again who that is and about the time that....

So there we were last week, on a train to Prague, and Ryan is saying "tell me about the time.." It was beautiful. And I told him again. He's learning who he is. I'm passing on the stories that he in turn will some day pass on to his daughter. And as we tell them they change, of course...the family grows now to include Ryan's wife and her family stories and that's the way it ought to be.

Stories. It's how we become who we are. We know who we are because we learn where we're from. That was one of the most forceful things I got from listening to Justice Murray Sinclair here two weeks ago. You have to know who you are.

To pass on the stories is a holy task – it's life giving and world creating.

On the same trip, though, and almost in the same breath, someone said "I don't know how someone like you can be part of the church – it's the same old thing over and over. "

When we gather at this table – we gather hungry. Hungry to hear the stories again; hungry to remember who we are. That's EXACTLY what we are doing here today. Tell us again, we say. Tell me again about the time we were slaves in Egypt but God rescued us with a strong and mighty arm. Tell me again.

Tell me again about Jesus. Remember the time he turned water into wine? The time he fed the multitude with only 5 loaves and 2 fish? Remember how he welcomed everybody, no matter who they were, and especially the people others rejected? And remember when he said "love is the most important thing ever in the whole world"? Remember the last time he ate with his friends and how he

said “every time you do this remember me” and “no one has greater love than to give up your life for your friends”

THAT’S WHAT WE’RE DOING HERE. You know that long prayer before we share the bread and the juice..it’s called the great thanksgiving but what it IS really is remembering. Telling the story again. You watch each time – different words but it starts with God creating the world and goes through the whole history – ending up with Jesus and what he did for us.

Tell us again. Tell us who we are. We remember who we are; we learn who we are at this table.

It’s a story telling world changing life affirming place. Tell me again. Tell me who I am. Tell me about God’s love affair with the world. Tell me who I am.

And there’s a mystery about it too – because when we sit here, with us here right now at this table are people from long ago – and the other side of the world. People here in spirit; some of them are elsewhere in the world but they are here with us

And some have died and THEY are here with us. It’s at a table like this that we realize it’s not so far from them to us; from here to there

Because in a very real way here IS there.

And the barriers are gone

This is a place and a time to learn again who you most deeply, truly are. What life is. And what it’s worth.

This is a time to be reminded again of who you are. As individuals and as a people. As groups. In some ways, the church and the RCMP both are in a particularly identity revisiting mode right now. Society has the church and the police under scrutiny – and regardless of the details around that, it calls us in a very specific way to ask the question about who we are. This is the very place to begin. This is the place where we revisit our very depths. Why we’re called to this work; what our deepest ideals and hopes and dreams are for the work we do as RCMP officers or as followers of Jesus. This is the place to begin. Who are we? We are first before anything else beloved children of God who calls us to lives of love and service.

This is the very place to revisit your life’s purpose – to bring the pain as well as the joy; the disappointments and the need for renewal; the unanswered questions and the vulnerability as well as the satisfaction and hope. This is the place for all of that.

Here the barriers are gone. And we join with a cloud of witnesses who have gone before us

Let the rich, dark, moist and fertile complexity of this table do its work in you. The bread is chewy and thick. It tastes like home. The juice is tangy and full of nutrients for body and soul.

Hear the story once again. Tell your own story once again. You are part of something bigger, more honourable and compelling than you daily remember. Let your soul delight itself in fullness; let your heart be nourished by this love

Let your story become joined with THE story as the river meets the sea