

March 26, 2020

Greetings!

Hi everyone. I hope all is well with you and yours. We're all still keeping our distance, doing all we can to stop/slow the spread of this disease, and finding ways to stay in touch with each other. I have been so touched by the reports of people exercising creativity and compassion... singing from balconies and open windows, posting video messages, calling strangers. There is so much good out there. Bless you all.

I always talk about the season of Lent as a journey. And certainly, this year, that journey is taking us somewhere we never expected. It is scary at times, and we have no idea where this path is going, but it is an exciting spiritual experience. We're learning about ourselves and rediscovering what's really important. When I was a kid, I had a poster on my wall – a gift from Sunday School. A beautiful photo of a path in the forest, with one ray of sunlight lighting a small area. The words read, "Guide me on my way, Lord. I need not know the path; just give me light enough to see the next step." A good prayer. Let's let that light in. Even if it's just for the next step.

During Lent, I often focus on spring cleaning. Of course this is the time of year that we clean our homes after a long cold winter. Things get scrubbed down, windows are cleaned and opened to let in fresh air. And if you're anything like me, this year the house will go through some major spring cleaning, now that I have some time on my hands!

So, I always think that we can turn this task into a spiritual exercise as well. Lent is about preparing ourselves for Easter; getting ready to let in new love and life. That preparation can be like spiritual spring cleaning. My suggestion to you this week is that you use your regular or seasonal cleaning jobs as spiritual exercises. For example...

If you're cleaning – scrubbing walls, washing windows, sweeping out the garage, or even all the regular chores like cleaning the bathroom or kitchen – take some time to reflect on cleaning your spirit. Say a prayer. Think about the stuff that needs to be cleaned out of your life: old grudges, hurts, fears... everything that might be stopping light/life/love from finding a place in your life. Let it go. It may go easily as you wipe a mirror, or it may take a lot of muscle and sweat while you sweep a year's worth of dirt out the garage door. Let it go.

Spring cleaning always gives me the opportunity to get rid of stuff I don't use or need. Good stuff, like clothing, that can be shared with others. As you go through your closets and drawers and find things that are still good and can be given away, think about the goodness you might have been hoarding in your own life. What do you have to give, or share with others? Time? A simple phone call to say hi? Forgiveness? The gift of listening? Discover the blessing of someone else teaching you the joy of giving.

Finally, I've been doing a lot of organizing this past week. Sorting through DVDs, junk drawers, papers, etc. It gives me the opportunity to focus on what's important. Prioritize. While you do the same, take a moment to think about what's really important to you. Most of us put a lot of energy, worry, and time into things that ultimately do us – or anyone else – no good. Refocus. This might be a time to put gratitude at the top of the list. Say a prayer, think of others, and share gratitude: remember medical, emergency, and essential service staff; family, friends, and neighbours; think of the sick and their care-givers; remember the Earth (it's interesting to note the number of stories circulating about how the air in many major cities is getting cleaner as people stop travelling and businesses shut down!). Let gratitude reshape your life and refocus your living.

Well, my sisters and brothers, journey on. Continue to take good care of yourself and others. Know that people are thinking about you, too, and sending lots of love your way. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

Be well. Peace.

Rev. Steve