

Dialogue

Have you ever felt like you were being followed by a voice that kept saying the same thing to you in different ways, through a variety of voices, themes, and contexts, wherever you went?

This particular shadowing voice is not new. However it became louder these past two Sundays as several of the more silent members of our conversation gave their voices to concerns that are in current conversation in our worshipping community. This was a very welcome happening. The overwhelming tone of our conversation has been about *our life as a congregation*, even in the midst of the concrete decisions we know we must now make.

The shadowing voice grew louder during pastors' testimonials during the First Call gathering; and in the wisdom of the Synod Assembly keynote speaker's deliberation on the theme Sacred Shift. We are so grateful to Deacon Peggy Hahn for her commitment to directness in assessing and describing the nuts and bolts of our underlying mission as children of God and carriers of God's good news. In, with, among, under and above everything we do, the certain plan is to be and share the love and grace of God. Everything else is likely a function of "method for the key moment". Deacon Hahn invited us on several occasions to "sit with the tension" of one consideration or another. Such a difficult task in a life that is so relentlessly shaped by demands for immediate resolution in everything.

On Tuesday this week, the speaker at the TMC Chaplains' Brown Bag Lunch offered a quote that sings. It is a choice gem from Leonard J. Swidler, Professor of Catholic Thought and Interreligious Dialogue at Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The primary purpose of dialogue is to learn, that is, to change and grow in the perception and understanding of reality, and then to act accordingly.

Change. Grow. Act.

These are exactly the themes of our summer sermons; the study of Richard Rohr teachings on the spiritual life; and our collaboration through the lens of the Strengths Finder assessment. No one in our community of members and "regulars" is outside the ring of dialogue and learning. We are about to engage the ONE-ness we share in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. The boundaries are fluid. Come and draw yourself in. All are welcome at this table.

Doing all that we do ... for the sake of the gospel (1 Cor.9:23).