



Summer Sermon Series ~ Stories From The Road

Keep Your Attention on the High Way

July 17, 2022

Rev. Emma Chattin, Preaching

First Reading ~ Luke 10:38-42

(Jesus continued from there toward Jerusalem.) As they traveled, Jesus entered a village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who seated herself at Jesus' feet and listened to his words. Martha, who was busy with all the details of hospitality, came to Jesus and said, "Rabbi, don't you care that my sister has left me all alone to do the household tasks? Tell her to help me!" Jesus replied, "Martha, Martha! You're worried and distracted by so many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

Second Reading ~ adapted from Father Richard Rohr in "The Great Spirit: Celtic and Native Spirituality"

The Romans had conquered much of Europe by the time of Jesus' birth. Yet while they ruled Britain, the Romans never occupied Ireland or parts of Scotland. This allowed the Celtic culture and Christian monks the freedom to thrive independently. They weren't controlled by Roman practicality or Greek thinking. As a result, Celtic Christianity was still grounded in the natural world, and they had much easier access to a larger cosmic notion of the Christ. John O'Donohue writes: "For the Celtic people, God within nature was not substance, rather it was a luminous and numinous presence that had depth, possibility and beauty." Celtic Christians had learned to respect the "First Bible" of creation before they started arguing about the second written one.

Also, like the desert fathers and mothers who influenced them, Celtic spirituality focused on rather different things than the mainstream church. For example, Celtic Christianity encouraged the practice of confession to an *anam cara* or a "soul friend" more than to an ordained priest. They also saw God as a deep kind of listening and speaking presence, as the Divine *Soul Friend*. At every moment and in every situation, God is the intimate, attentive and encouraging friend, much more than any kind of offended deity.

Pelagius (c. 354-418), a British monk and theologian, trusted original blessing more than original sin. In one of his letters, Pelagius wrote: "You will realize that doctrines are inventions of the human mind, as it tries to penetrate the mystery of God. You will realize that Scripture itself is the work of human minds, recording the examples and teachings of Jesus. Thus it is not what you believe that matters; it is how you respond with your heart and your actions. It is not believing in Christ that matters. It is becoming like him."