

May 16, 2021
Seventh Sunday of Easter
Transformation!

In Between Times

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Preaching

First Reading ~ *Acts 1:15-17, 20-28*

One day Peter stood up in the midst of the believers, a gathering of perhaps a hundred and twenty. “Sisters and brothers,” he said, “The saying in scripture, uttered long ago by the Holy Spirit through David, was destined to be filled through Judas, who guided those who arrested Jesus. He was numbered among us and was given his share in this ministry. For David wrote in the book of Psalms, ‘Let his encampment be desolate, may no one dwell on it, and let another take his office.’ It is necessary, therefore, that one of those who accompanied us during all the time that Jesus moved among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us— one of these must become a witness with us to the Resurrection.” At that, they nominated two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed, “O God, you can read the hearts of people. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take the place in this apostolic ministry, replacing Judas, who turned aside to go to his own place.” They then cast lots between the two, and the lot fell on Matthias; who was added to the eleven apostles.

Second Reading ~ *adapted from Father Richard Rohr in “Grieving As Sacred Space: How Anxious and Ambiguous Times May Offer Up The Most Holy of Gifts*

To get out of a seemingly unending cycle of normalcy, we have to allow ourselves to be drawn into sacred space, into liminality. All transformation takes place here. We have to allow ourselves to be drawn out of “business as usual” and remain patiently on the “threshold” (*limen*, in Latin) where we are betwixt and between the familiar and the completely unknown. There our old world is left behind, while we are not yet sure of the new existence. It is a unique spiritual position where human beings hate to be, but where the biblical God is always leading them. It is the realm where God can best get at us, when we are finally out of the way, between our old comfort zone and any possible new answer. It is no fun. Think of the Israelites in the desert.

This is the sacred space where the old world is able to fall apart, and a bigger world is revealed. If we don’t encounter liminal space in our lives, we start idealizing normalcy. The threshold is God’s waiting room. Here we are taught openness and patience.

If you are not taught and trained in how to hold anxiety, how to live with ambiguity, how to entrust and wait - you will run - try to run back to the old ways, or become angry, or worse, violent. Anything to feel special and again in control. Some indigenous peoples call this liminal space “crazy time”. You just feel strange there. Few know how to stay on the threshold. Yet everything genuinely new emerges in some kind of liminal space.