



Wilderness Training

Focus over Fear, Direction over Despair

March 13, 2022

Lent 2

Rev. Emma Chattin, Preaching

First Reading ~ *Luke 13:31-35*

Just then, some Pharisees came to Jesus and said, “You need to get out of town, and fast, Herod is trying to kill you.” Jesus replied, “Go tell that fox, ‘Today and tomorrow, I’ll be casting out demons and healing people, and on the third day I’ll reach my goal.’ Even with all that, I’ll need to continue on with my journey today, tomorrow, and the day after that, since no prophet can be allowed to die anywhere except Jerusalem!”

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often have I wanted to gather your children together as a mother bird collects her babies under her wings- yet you refuse me! So take note: your house will be left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God!””

Second Reading ~ *adapted from Sister Joan Chittister OSB & Rowan Williams in "Uncommon Gratitude: Alleluia For All That Is"*

Crisis places us in a stubborn wilderness, facing emotional death, and desperate to find a way out of it all. All of life has changed and left us wanting. Where is God now? Where is God here? How can anyone possibly find anything here to which they can honestly sing an alleluia?

But there are, in fact, great alleluia moments to be celebrated in a time of crisis. It is the junction of the ordinary and the cataclysmic. Crisis, then, is a test of the deepest parts of the self. It measures what there is in us that is truly full of life. It ferrets out in us the part of us that simply refuses to die. It is a very wholesome moment, this choice for life in the face of death. It is about action. And the alleluia moment comes when we finally realize that life is not about one thing, it is about many things. It is about parts of ourselves we have not yet recognized. “Crisis refines life,” Allan K. Chalmers writes, “In them you discover your self.” There are those, of course, who may fold in a time of crisis. There are others who simply take off in a different direction with all the same talents and find life beyond the boundaries of their previous self, more self than ever! Sometimes a crisis shows us what we are becoming. David faced Goliath and became the Goliath within himself. A crisis provides us an opportunity to do the same.