

## FOUNDER'S DAY SEPTEMBER 7, 2024

DURING TIME SPENT WITH THE GOSPEL PASSAGE WHICH WE JUST HEARD, ONE OF MY MORE PROFOUND INSIGHTS WAS TO BE AWED ONCE AGAIN BY THE WISDOM OF JESUS. JESUS FED HIS DISCIPLES BEFORE ASKING ANYTHING OF THEM. PLEASE THEN, HANG IN – FOOD IS COMING! TRUTH BE TOLD THIS TABLE THAT WE SURROUND PROMISES THE BEST NOURISHMENT WE WILL EVER NEED.

OUR SISTER FROM OHIO, ANNE, DID ASK SOME THOUGHT PROVOKING AND ANIMATED QUESTIONS-DIDN'T SHE? I WANT TO ADD ANOTHER ONE. MINE- MIGHT CHALLENGE YOUR COUNTING AND MEMORY SKILLS-READY? HOW MANY FOUNDER'S DAY CELEBRATIONS HAVE BEEN IN YOUR HISTORY?

TODAY, I DO BELIEVE, IS MY 50<sup>TH</sup> PRIVILEGED OPPORTUNITY TO CELEBRATE THIS AWESOME MOMENT IN OUR CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY-A DAY WE ESPECIALLY HONOR OUR FOUNDING MOTHERS – AUGUSTINE, FRANCESCA, JACOBINA, AND JOSEPHA. IT IS COMMON TO SAY THEIR NAMES AS IF THEY ARE INTIMATE FRIENDS – ALMOST PEERS. YET, NEVER VISIBLE TO US, THEY OFTEN FEEL NEAR BY OR SOMETIMES SEEM LIKE THEY SIT “AT OUR TABLES”. LIKE THE THOUSANDS OF OTHER DECEASED SISTERS WE SANG ABOUT THIS MORNING, IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT ALTHOUGH, THESE WOMEN MAY NOT BE SEEN. THEIR PRESENCE LINKS US TO THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE. WE KNOW ALL TOO WELL IF NOT GRIEVED, WE CAN FEEL DISCONNECTED. WE COULD NOT BE HERE TODAY WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING THEIR RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL THROUGH THEIR SENSE OF MISSION, COURAGEOUS RISK-TAKING AND ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT OR PERHAPS A RESISTED YES TO A VOW OF “BLIND OBEDIENCE” THAT HAD TO CALL OUT THE BEST IN THEM. THIS DAY HOPEFULLY THEIR SPIRITS CAN TAKE MUCH PRIDE IN US AND THE MANY THOUSANDS OF “SHOOTS – AND LITERAL BRANCHES” OF DOMINICAN LIFE ROOTED HERE IN AMITYVILLE AND AFAR. AS OFTEN RECOGNIZED, THE DNA OF OUR GERMAN SISTERS' FLOWS THROUGH OUR SHARED VOCATIONAL CALL TO MISSION.

SOME MIGHT ASK – “IS THE CALL STILL VALUABLE?”

171 YEARS AND STILL COUNTING IS THE ANSWER! AS ASSOCIATES AND PARTNERS IN MINISTRY, YOU, ENHANCE THE RICHNESS OF OUR COMMON BAPTISMAL CALL TO FOLLOW CHRIST’S WAYS AND TO SHARE IN THE CHARISM OF ST. DOMINIC – TO PREACH THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD’S UNCONDITIONAL LOVE. ALL OF US STRIVE TO DO THIS THROUGH OUR DAILY LIVES AND OUR COMMON QUEST TO KNOW GOD.

PERHAPS YOU WON’T AGREE TO THIS IMAGE BUT THROUGHOUT THE YEARS AS I BETTER UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED THE EXCITEMENT, ENERGY, AND FOCUS OF A FOUNDER’S DAY CELEBRATION – I HAVE CARRIED THE IMAGE OF PARTICIPATING AT AN INTENSE PEP RALLY! THE SATURDAY AFTER LABOR DAY HELD THE PROMISE OF A JOYFUL GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY AIMED AT INSPIRING ENTHUSIASM. I ENJOYED THIS DAY AS AN ENCOURAGEMENT WHICH STEEPED US IN THE MEMORY AND LEGACY OF OUR FOUNDERS AS WE BEGAN ANOTHER YEAR OF MINISTRY. HOPEFULLY, THIS EXPERIENCE IS STILL TRUE TODAY- EVEN IF A BIT DIFFERENT. FOR SO LONG A PERIOD OF TIME, THIS DAY HELPS US DIG DEEP INTO OUR IDENTITY AS SISTERS OF ST. DOMINIC OF AMITYVILLE. WE GROUND OURSELVES ON THE SAME YET EVER-CHANGING LANDS OF BROOKLYN, AMITYVILLE, PUERTO RICO, AND BEYOND.

ANNE, THROUGH HER GIFTEDNESS AS A STORYTELLER, SUGGESTS THE AIR WE BREATHE IS THAT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT’S. THE WATERS OF THE NEAR-BY OCEAN REMIND US NOT OF SEPERATION-RATHER, OF OUR ANCESTORS INCREDIBLE TRUST IN GOD’S PROVIDENCE. MY MEMORIES OF TODAY WERE OFTEN THE KINDLE TO FIRE MYSELF AND I VENTURE TO SAY OTHER MEMBERS FOR WHAT UNKNOWNNS WERE TO COME DURING A NEW YEAR FROM A PERSONAL, COMMUNAL, AND WORLD-WIDE PERSPECTIVE. ANNE, I HEARD YOU AND THE VALUE OF CREATION’S ELEMENTS! YES, THEY ARE THE STUFF WE ARE MADE OF!

BY THE WAY – YOU ARE A FINE POTTER, ANNE. AS A POTTER YOUR WORK WHICH I HAVE ADMIRERD FOR YEARS IS PHENOMENAL! HEARING

ABOUT AND SEEING YOUR WORK CREATES, I MUST ADMIT, A BIT OF A PAINFUL OR HURTFUL DIFFICULTY FOR ME. I'M WONDERING HOW THE OBJECT WHICH AT THE AGE OF 9- I LOVINGLY SHAPED AND RE-SHAPED ON A MADE FOR KIDS POTTERY WHEEL WAS NOT DISCOVERED AMONG MY DECEASED PARENT'S MOST PRIZED POSSESSIONS. THE UNIQUE VASE- THE WORK OF MY HANDS- FEATURED AN UNINTENTIONALLY CONFIGURED VASE INCAPABLE OF HOLDING A FLOWER LET ALONE WATER! THE LEFT SIDE WAS APPROXIMATELY 4 INCHES HIGH AND THE RIGHT SIDE ABOUT 3 ½ INCHES LOWER. ISN'T IMPERFECTION BEAUTIFUL? I CAN'T IMAGINE WHERE MY MASTERPIECE LANDED!

MORE IMPORTANTLY, YOU-ANNE, REMIND US THAT FOUNDER'S DAY IS OUR STORY. IT'S A STORY WHICH GIFTS US WITH WISDOM, MOTIVATION, PURPOSE, AND COMMUNAL SUPPORT. OF COURSE, MIGHT I INCLUDE, A SPECIALLY CHOSEN GERMAN MEAL AND DANCING! ALL THIS WAS OF GOD'S GOODNESS AND CONTINUES TO BE OF GOD EVEN AS WE NOW SMALLER IN NUMBER, LOOK AND MOVE DIFFERENTLY. REMEMBER WHEN THIS CHAPEL NEEDED FOLDING CHAIRS TO ACCOMMODATE THE NUMBERS? WE EVEN DANCED A FEW MORE DANCES THAN WE WILL LATER-BUT WE ARE STILL DANCING! WE SIGNS OF JOY AND HOPE CAN STILL ROCK!

SOME THINGS CHANGE- SOME REMAIN THE SAME—GOD STILL DESIRES TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO US PERSONALLY AND COMMUNALLY- SO LISTEN TO THIS MESSAGE:

AND THEN A NEW WORD CAME TO AMITYVILLE FROM THE LORD:

“RISE UP- BE OFF TO THE POTTER'S HOUSE. THE PAST FORMED OUR ROOTS AND REMAINS IN OUR BRANCHES. BUT WE ARE NOT THE PAST. DWELLING IN THE SILENCE, WE LOOK AHEAD TOWARDS NEW SEASONS – FORMING EVEN WHERE MUCH IS CHANGING – WITHIN THIS CYCLE OF TRANSFORMATION – WE ARE ONE – DIFFERENT THAN WE ONCE WERE”!

THIS IS A QUOTE FROM LAST MONTH'S LCWR MEETING.

WITH GREAT RESPECT FOR OUR DESCENDANTS AND FOR ALL OF LIFE THAT HAS EVOLVED BEFORE THIS DAY WE HAVE INTENTIONALLY PUT

OURSELVES IN THE CYCLE OF TRANSFORMATION DURING THE PAST 3 YEARS – IN THIS THE SEASON OF CREATION -GOD BECKONS US AND OTHERS WHO LIVE OUT THE CHARISM OF RELIGIOUS LIFE TO SOMETHING NEW. LIKE THE MEMBERS OF LCWR WHO HEARD A NEW MESSAGE, JEREMIAH CHALLENGES US – TO HEAR A NEW INVITATION-TO BE THE AUTHORS OF A NEW NARRATIVE. MIGHT GOD’S DESIRE BE BEGGING FOR A NEW WAY TO CELEBRATE THIS DAY? ONE THAT ASKS US TO BE ENTHUSED, ENERGIZED AND HOPEFUL AS ALWAYS, NOT IN SPITE OF THE TIMES RATHER BECAUSE OF THEM! LEANING INTO THE GRACES OF OUR TRANSFORMATIVE VISIONING COMMITMENT AND ROOTED IN OUR STRONGER IDENTITY AS A “WE” --MAY WE GO DEEPER INTO SILENCE IN ORDER TO BE RESTORED BY OUR CALL TO MISSION EVEN IN LIGHT OF WHAT THESE PRESENT TIMES SEEM TO PROJECT AS A COLLAPSING WORLD. JEREMIAH UNDERSTOOD CHAOS. HIS DAYS WERE MUCH LIKE OURS. HE NOTICED THE BROKENNESS OF HIS PEOPLE AND HEARD THE CRIES OF THOSE SURROUNDING HIM. HE WELL REALIZED THAT PEOPLE WERE NOT ATTUNED TO GOD. IN HIS DISCOURAGEMENT, THOUGH, JEREMIAH STILL RESPONDED. IN HIS INNER QUIET HE EVENTUALLY LEARNED THE PROFOUND MEANING OF A POTTER’S GIFTEDNESS -JUST AS WE DID THROUGH HER WORDS AND CREATVITY OF OUR SISTER ANNE. MIGHT THEN WE ALLOW THE MASTER POTTER, OUR CREATOR TO TAKE EACH OF US AS WE ARE AND BE HELD, STRETCHED, CARESSED, HEALED, MAYBE EVEN PRESSURED OR HURT, IF NEED BE FOR THE SAKE OF MISSION. WE MAY THINK WE’RE NOT CAPABLE – THAT WE CAN’T ANYMORE – THAT OTHERS MUST! HOWEVER, LISTEN AGAIN TO THE WORD OF GOD: “CAN I NOT DO FOR YOU?”

IN THIS TIME OF HUMAN AND CREATION’S VULNERABILITY GOD RE-FASHIONS US TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE BECAUSE GOD TRUSTS WE STILL CAN!

WHO IS IT THAT YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN BE? NOT NECESSARILY WHAT YOU MIGHT DO - BUT WHO CAN YOU BE FOR THE SAKE OF THE HOLY PREACHING? PERHAPS THIS IS A NEW CALL TO MINISTRY! I WILL NEVER FORGET BEING IN THE COMPANY OF S.THEA BOWMAN, WHO KNEW SHE

HAD JUST A FEW MONTHS BEFORE HER DEATH AS SHE PASSIONATELY PROCLAIMED:

“DON’T EVER FORGET-GOD USES US IN WAYS BEYOND OUR COMPREHENSION!”

THROUGH OUR MINISTRY OF PRESENCE WHO IS IT THAT YOU AND I BRING AS CONTRIBUTORS TO OUR NEW NARRATIVE? FOR THOSE WHO MIGHT WONDER ABOUT OUR ON-GOING IMPACT OF MISSION TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD – HERE’S ONE OF THE LATEST! YOU MIGHT KNOW 111-YEAR OLD- S. FRANCIS DOMINICI, WHO NOW LIVES UPSTAIRS. SHE REALIZED THAT A COUPLE OF HER AIDES WERE CURIOUS ABOUT THE BEADS THAT SISTERS HOLD TIGHTLY AND OFTEN USE. FRANCIS ASKED HER AIDES IF THEY WOULD BE INTERESTED IN LEARNING AND SO SHE BEGAN TO TEACH ABOUT HOW TO PRAY THE ROSARY. HER VERY BEING WREAKS OF MISSION!

AS S. PAT TWOHILL REMINDED US A YEAR AGO ON THIS DAY- “WE ARE NOT DEAD YET”! WHILE WE MAY NOT BE ABOUT PROJECTS AND BUILDINGS NOR THE “DOING” IN THE SAME WAYS AS WAS ONCE-WE ARE TENDING TO THE VALUE OF GOING DEEPER INTO THE HEART OF GOD- UNDERSTANDING THAT CONTEMPLATION IS AS REAL AS ANY STRATEGY. WE CONTINUE TO RESPOND TO MISSION AS WE ALWAYS HAVE. WE WILL RESPOND AS WOMEN AND MEN WHO KNOW BETTER WHO WE ARE AND WHOSE WE ARE BECAUSE OF OUR INTERIOR WORK- OUR INTENTIONAL CONTEMPLATIVE TIMES GIVE OUR PERMISSION TO BE RESHAPED, REFASHIONED BY GOD.

I WONDER IF OUR COMMUNAL CHOICE TO EXPLORE THE POTENTIAL GRACES OF TRANSFORMATIVE VISIONING HAS TRULY MADE A DIFFERENCE FOR US. HAVE OUR DEEPER CONVERSATIONS ABOUT WHAT’S ESSENTIAL TO OUR VOWED LIFE OR HAS A STRONGER SENSE OF “WE” FORMED THE CONTENTS FOR A NEW CHAPTER IN OUR HISTORY? THE POTTER SHAPES AND RESHAPES CLAY- NOT ONLY TO WHAT’S VISIBLE TO THE EYE. THE MORE INTENSE, INTENTIONAL TOUCH IS TO WHAT’S INSIDE-LESS VISIBLE- IT’S THE VERY CORE OF EACH OF US.

JESUS IS DRAWING US TOWARD HIM. PERHAPS NOT IN A BOAT AS HE DID THE DISCIPLES. HOWEVER, HIS CHOICE TO BE ALONE- TO BE CONTEMPLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS HIS HUMANITY. AS DOES PETER'S DOUBT, FEAR, AND GOOD ALL ROLL INTO ONE LOVABLE PERSONALITY. PETER'S HUMANITY IS SO LIKE OURS! HIS PROTEST TO JESUS BY USING THE WORD "IF" – "IF IT IS YOU" AND "BUT" – "BUT WHEN HE SAW" REVEALS A BIT OF HIS SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS. SOON HE IS BROUGHT TO DEPTHS OF VULNERABILITY. SCARED, PETER YELLS "HELP" GRABBING FOR JESUS. JESUS IS THERE!

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU AND I BEEN SCOOPED UP BY GOD? ISN'T THAT WHY WE ARE HERE? ISN'T THAT WHY WE RESPOND DAILY TO THE CALL TO GET UP AGAIN – WHETHER IT BE FIGURATIVELY OR LITERALLY? HOW OFTEN HAS THAT HAND OF THE CREATOR REIMAGINED US OR EVEN EXTENDED ITSELF TO US? THAT'S WHY I INVITE ALL OF US TO FOCUS OR BETTER SAID RE-FOCUS OURSELVES ON MISSION – OUR VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE IS THE MAKING OF A NEW NARRATIVE! LETTING WHO WE ARE BE OUR WAY OF THE HOLY PREACHING. THROUGH OUR PRESENCE MIGHT WE LIFT THE SPIRIT OF EACH OTHER AND THOSE WE ENCOUNTER? WILL WE EXTEND OUR ARMS AND HEARTS TO A GLOBAL COMMUNITY THROUGH TIMES SUCH AS THESE ENCUMBERED WITH REALITIES OF RAPID ECOLOGICAL CHANGES, RACIAL CONFLICTS, DISPLACEMENT OF REAL PERSONS, VIOLENCE, POLARIZATION, DISRESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE FROM BEGINNING TO END, AND JUDGMENT OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION. WE CANNOT CHANGE ALL OF THIS PAIN BUT WE CAN PRAY, LAMENT, AND BE ATTENTIVE. IF WE DO NOT GRIEVE, THE TEARS OF THE WORLD WE WILL NOT BE CONNECTED. CERTAINLY, THERE ARE ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN YET ALSO EMPATHY, COMPASSION AND LOVE NEED TO BE MADE VISIBLE- ALL IS MISSION!

MAY THIS FOUNDER'S DAY WHETHER IT BE YOUR 90<sup>TH</sup>, 1<sup>ST</sup>, OR SOMETIME IN BETWEEN-WHEREVER YOU FIND YOURSELF ON LAND, SEA, OR CHAIR- BELIEVE THAT JESUS SPEAKS TO EACH ONE OF US TODAY:

"TAKE COURAGE, IT IS I, DO NOT BE AFRAID!"