

Illuman of Indiana-Michigan: We Have Work to Do

By Mike Whitman, Co-Convener for Illuman of Indiana-Michigan

We are now several months into the New Year, and like all seasons, spring promises its own magical and welcome change. These shifts invite a question being asked—maybe two: “What is different in me, and what is the same?” and, “Are these changes helpful, challenging, and transformative?”

At 73, I have noticed some comfort in change. This seems contradictory when you think of how old men are “supposed” to be. This does not always mean I like change, but I am growing into a place where I am realizing that change is what life is all about. The Buddhists have an image of this. They invite you to look into a river. It always looks the same, but when you look carefully, you realize that the water is never the same. It is always different as the river moves forward. Certainly COVID-19 has vividly taught us this lesson as well.

I recently read an article in a *National Geographic* magazine titled, “Why We Like What We Like: A Scientist’s Surprising Findings.” The author, Bill Sullivan, wrote, “Our actions are governed by hidden biological forces—which is to say that we have little or no control over our personal tastes.” I was glad to note that he was primarily speaking about “tastes” as meaning preferences, from foods to friends. He concludes his article by speaking about understanding these dynamics. In our spiritual journey as men, we come to realize how much our inner life remains hidden to us. And we see how unknown and unseen brokenness can and has run amuck in our personal lives and in the world at large. It is in our gentle quest for transformation that change—great and small—makes a difference and guides our “tastes” in directions of wholeness.

This is the work that Illuman of Indiana-Michigan wants to be a part of and is a part of. It feels imperative that, as men, we awaken to this need in ourselves, for the good of the world to which we belong.