Mindfulness Meditation
January 10, 2021
First Sunday after Epiphany

Bell *(a call to mindfulness)*

Not in the dark of buildings confiding,
Not in some heaven, light years away:
Here in the place the new light is shining;
Now is the kingdom, and now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever;
Gather us in and make us your own;
Gather us in, all peoples together,
Fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

Bell *(a little silence, about 2 minutes)*

The topic of Richard Rohr's daily meditations this past week was entitled, "When Things are Unveiled." I found them to be a particular source of strength in these difficult days when so many things we once believed and counted on have been shaken to the core. I continue to struggle with negative emotions and anger over recent events in Washington as well as a sense of hopelessness during an unrelenting pandemic. In my better moments I get brief glimpses that these times are a profound opportunity to step out of ego-centric patterns of thinking and behaving and become open to new possibilities. Richard's reflections this week spoke directly to this 'unveiling':

"When things are "unveiled," we stop taking things for granted. That's what major events like the COVID-19 pandemic [and the events in Washington D.C. this past week] do for us. They reframe reality in a radical way and offer us an invitation to greater depth and breadth. If we trust the universal pattern, the wisdom of all times and all places, including the creation and evolution of the cosmos itself, we know that an ending is also the place for a new beginning. Death is followed by a new kind of life…

Contemplative prayer is a form of unveiling, because it reveals what is going on beneath the polished and busy surfaces of our minds, our hearts, and our bodies. When we finally get still enough, contemplation can live within us in pure, open moments of right here, right now. This is enough, this is fullness. If it is not right here, right now, it doesn't exist. If we don't know God now, how would we know God later? The mystics say we won't. We will not recognize God later if we cannot recognize God now. It is a matter of seeing God now through the shadow and the disguise.

Contemplative prayer lives in a spacious place, free of personal needs or meanings or even interpretations. Life does not care what I like or don't like. It doesn't matter a bit. If we stay in the world of preference, we keep ourselves as the reference point. Does it really matter what color I like best or what my current favorite movie is? It changes from moment to moment. No wonder people have identity crises. No wonder people have a fragile self-image; they have nothing solid to build on beyond changing opinions and feelings. If formerly we said, "I think therefore I am," now it might be "I choose therefore I am." That's not a solid foundation to build on.

The real question is "What does this have to say to me?" Those who are totally converted come to every experience and ask not whether or not they liked it, but what does it have to teach them. "What's the message or gift in this for me? How is God in this event? Where is God in this suffering?" This is a prayer of unveiling, asking that the cruciform shape of reality be revealed to us within the very shape and circumstances of our own lives."

Bell (*18 minutes of silence)**

1st Bell

2nd Bell

Reflections of the Community: Hearing from One Another

Closing Prayer *(unison)*

As we move forth from this sacred time together
May we live this [week],
Compassionate of heart,
Clear in word,
Gracious in awareness,
Courageous in thought,
Generous in love.
AMEN

**The simplest and most profound portal into silence and mindfulness is the breath. Allow all other mental activity to rest as you become mindful your natural breath. Feel the movement of air as it flows in and out of your body tenderly embracing it and simply allowing it to be what it is. As thoughts arise, allow them to be and return to your breath. In this way, your presence is maintained in the here and now.*

References: "When Things are Unveiled." Theme: A time of Unveiling. January 4 and 8, 2021. Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM. CAC website.
"Here in the Place." Glory To God Hymnal p 401. Verse 4