

I only have a few themes in my life, and so, you have heard them already on any given Sunday morning. I repeat the things that are the most important to my life of faith and so I hope you don't mind that I come back to the same themes, Sunday after Sunday. I harp on being reborn to **new life** through our life's struggles; on taking **risks** to find faith in places we did not imagine; in seeing the **new** things that God is doing in every age, including right now; I believe in **telling our stories** to each other so that we can believe in Christ Jesus through them. And the main thing which I repeat, and which the man who had been born blind can teach us: **TRUST.**

In this very long story of the man born blind, we hear all of these themes. He suffered and was reborn through sight.

He was willing to accept something new – Jesus and what did it matter that he was being healed on a traditional day that people rested from everything

He testified to the Pharisees (and anyone who would listen) despite the huge risk to himself and his family...that they would be thrown out of the synagogue. He told his story as honestly as he could. This is what happened to me, he said.

AND he trusted. Our Gospel reading is very long this morning because the formerly blind man kept on telling his story and John wants us to get a sense of the power of his testimony and the reaction of those he told.

His story became more eloquent with the re-telling. The first time he told his story to the Pharisees he says simply, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." And as the Pharisees demanded more detail of him, he was able to tell more, and even get a little cheeky with the Jewish leaders. "Oh, do you want to be his disciples too?"

When we are asked to testify to what God has done for us, many of us get very shy. We may not have grown up in a family where we shared our faith openly. It's something that one has to practice in order to get better at it.

In my time in Honduras, on most Sundays there was a member of the congregation who came up front and told his or her story of how God acted in his life, or how she witnessed a miracle. They told of how they found that God is Good. All the time. I love it if when we do that here. It's only at particular times of the year that we usually ask for people to share their faith. Many of us have shared very personal stories of why our faith is important to us. It means so much.

And here is an open invitation. If you would like to tell your story please come talk to me about it and we'll find a time to let you share your experience, strength and hope with the congregation.

In that other tradition to which I belong we must tell our stories. It's part of our recovery, and as painful as it may be the first time, we must take this step in order to remind ourselves of what our Higher Power has done for us that we could not do for ourselves, and in order to help the newcomer who is still struggling and fearful, and needs to hear how it works.

We have come to the midpoint of Lent. We have a break from our ban on flowers and celebrate with a little color, and a remembrance of our mothers, and in England, Mother Church. All of this puts us in a mode of readiness! Liturgically we are getting ready for Holy Week and Easter.

One of our most blessed texts in all of the Holy Scripture is Psalm 23 which we recited today. If we have wondered how God is with us in times of trouble, this scripture reminds us how. God leads us beside still waters. God restores us in times of rest and beauty. God has a rod and a staff that keep us safe. Our heads are anointed, the water of refreshment cools us and we have a home in Jesus Christ that will keep us warm and safe and dry. Every day, all the time.

If you have not taken on a Lenten discipline yet this year I would like to recommend to you that you consider memorizing Psalm 23. If you memorized it as a child, start over and do it again. Consider saying it every day for the rest of Lent.

The Lord is our Shepherd and it is helpful to us to remember that we do dwell in the house of the Lord forever.