

COVENANT GROUP SESSION
Follen Community Church
Lexington, MA
June 2018

Epiphany

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Please remember to respond to the email from Susanne Intrilligator about your intentions for next year.

CANDLE LIGHTING AND OPENING WORDS:

“The word ‘epiphany’ probably has a million definitions. It’s the occurrence when the mind, the body, the heart, and the soul focus together and see an old thing in a new way.”

~Maya Angelou

SILENCE

CHECK IN:

1. What was your experience with the spiritual exercise?
2. Describe a time when you have experienced an epiphany, “seeing an old thing a new way,” that has had an impact on your life.
3. What is lifting you up or draining your spirit these days?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE for JUNE: Epiphany

Physicist Freeman Dyson solved the central problem of quantum electrodynamics, a theory that describes how light and matter interact. Dyson was on a Greyhound bus trip across America when the revelation came to him. He said, “...For two weeks I had not thought about physics, and now it came bursting into my consciousness like an explosion.”

He said of scientific theories: “You sit quietly gestating them, for nine months or whatever the required time may be, and then one day they are out on their own, not belonging to you any more but to the whole community of scientists. Whatever it is that you produce, a baby, a book, or a theory, it is a piece of the magic of creation. You are producing something that you do not fully understand.”

Writer’s Almanac, December 15, 2008

Sometimes the greatest wisdom, the most astonishing epiphanies, come when we put everything down and stop seeking, when we set aside time to just be, rather than do. Can you relax your way to wisdom? Give it a try!

SILENCE

MAIN READING

“Moments of grace, epiphanies, and great insights are lost to us because we are in too much of a hurry to notice them. Slow down or you’ll miss the good stuff.

It is reported that the poet and doctor William Carlos Williams used to carry a notepad around with him. On it was written: “Things I noticed today that I’ve missed until today.”

Ask yourself in the morning—what will my attention bring me today? By evening’s end, you will have an answer.

Be prepared to look long and steadily at things. They will speak to you and reveal themselves.

'Boredom,' notes gestalt therapist Fritz Perls, 'is lack of attention.' Take yourself off automatic pilot and you enter a whole new world of wonders.

'The moment one gives close attention to anything, even a blade of grass,' writer Henry Miller observed, 'it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribable magnificent world in itself.'

Pay attention. Stay awake. Jelaluddin Rumi, the thirteenth century Sufi poet, knows what is required:

'No more words. In the name of this place we drink in
With our breathing, stay quiet like a flower.
So the nightbirds will start singing.'

Brusat, Frederic & Mary Ann. *Spiritual Literacy: Reading the Sacred in Everyday Life*

QUESTIONS:

1. What have you slowed down and given close attention to recently? What was your experience like?
2. Do you have times where you can just "be?"
3. How did the Spiritual Exercise extend, deepen, or relate to the Main Reading?

AFFIRMATIONS:

This is a time to consider the experience we have just had, and share gratitude, appreciation, concerns, or ideas. Try to start your sharing with "I like..." "I wish..." or "I wonder..."

CLOSING WORDS:

"There is a kind of tragedy to all our lives, consisting of failures, of losses, of mortalities — but that sad landscape is salted with pleasures, with unions, with epiphanies and revelations, at least if you're looking out for them. The trick is to hold both and maybe value both; we're in a culture that's desperate to be happy, which often turns into desperate to be shallow, numb, tuned out. And therein the depth and meaning is lost."

--Rebecca Solnit

Let us go forth using the gifts of sacred listening. The light within me honors the light within you. Go in peace.