

Call to Worship, October 6 - 7, 2018 – 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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In the course of the past summer and continuing even now in this mild Fall, it's likely that many of us have had the good fortune to go on hikes or take exploratory walks, perhaps with Audubon, or White's Woods, or Flanders Nature Center. On many of these adventures we generally had the opportunity to interact with folks who had similar interests, to learn and experience something new in creation, something to wonder at or to be grateful for.

There is a thread not unlike this, running through the readings we have been listening to from the Gospel of Mark these last weeks, and it will continue in the few weeks to come before we end the Church Year. It is the theme of journeying, travelling as disciples and interacting with Jesus and learning from him along the way. Is it possible, do you think, that we might imagine ourselves on such a journey?

Two weeks ago, the disciples walking behind Jesus were arguing about their status within their group. To give them a sense of balance, Jesus called to their attention a small child, insignificant in the society of that day, (along with widows and the poor,) and suggested that they too become just as insignificant, just as in need of care. Last week, John seemed to reassert the notion of the role of the disciple as having a chosen status, - they alone should be doing what Jesus did, - only to have Jesus clarify what it means to be a disciple, named or un-named: simple generosity in the face of need.

Today we will hear that they have reached Judea from Galilee, and other players have entered the scene, but the disciples still have much to learn, officiously trying to prevent people in the crowd from bringing children to Jesus for his blessing. Rebuking them firmly, he tells them, ".....the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Perhaps we should pause here and observe, not the disciples, but the children, dependent completely on others for their needs; for them, all caring is gift! Their very openness signs their gratitude. May we bring to Jesus the same willingness to be open to his blessing.

