

Conversation Circle: Surprised by the Spirit
May 31, 2021 by Zoom
Notes on questions posed by the Primate

Step 2: reflections on Acts 1:6-8

1. How do you imagine the apostles are feeling in this conversation with Jesus?
 - Hopeful but finding it difficult
 - Like pandemic, didn't know what was happening around the next corner
 - Confused, looking for leadership
 - Looking for reassurance
 - Questioning: what kingdom is going to be established?
 - Wanting to hope
 - Grieving coming loss
 - Need some kind of future to look forward to
 - Had been patient, now being told they need more patience

2. What emotions does this conversation with Jesus stir up for you?
 - Are we at the end of this hard time, or is there a lot more to come?
 - Reminder of books read that seem to be dystopian future right now
 - Frightened
 - Uncertain
 - Hope is even more important now to balance fear
 - Even small things can make a positive difference, reassure that good still exists
 - Disciples patiently waiting for the next step, can we?
 - Power of Spirit at Pentecost is both individual and collective
 - Goals fit together in God's way
 - Slogan "we're all in this together" for disciples and us
 - Recognizing that there is always a price: joining together we can do it

Step 3: Looking back, looking forward

1. In what ways has our community of faith felt lost or struggled to see the Spirit?
 - Hard to feel connection in virtual services, not like being together in building
 - But still sense of the Spirit- maybe a virtual spirit?
 - Do feel that its Church, but strange/different
 - Worship did make a difference to sense of isolation
 - We are not the only ones that had to go virtual, e.g. arts companies, Cirque de Soleil finding new ways to reach out
 - Felt flat
 - Loss of sense of how many people are actually connecting because of one-way communications sometimes
 - Grieving that we are not all together in one place but recognition that we never were (seniors, shut-ins, working etc)
 - Sadness that some people died alone but affirmation that God was at their bedside
 - Deaths that have not been celebrated/marked as we wanted

2. What has surprised you over the past year?
 - How we've gotten used to things, normalized
 - Adaptations, especially technology like Zoom
 - Reaching out in different ways
 - Kindness of strangers and neighbours and community agencies
 - Kinship of being awake at night in prayer and sensing others awake too around the world, like a separated monastic community

3. What has our community of faith learned from the experience of this past year?'
 - How isolated people really are
 - How important it is to keep in touch
 - Need to deepen inclusiveness of community so everyone is welcome and none shut out
 - Those who cannot get to the building of the church shouldn't be alone
 - That there are a lot of people who have trouble sleeping: maybe we could support this as a ministry, e.g. a book of prayers for 3 am (suggested with Lord's Prayer, 23rd psalm, Taize verses)
 - Friends are more important than we thought

4. What questions are we being called to wrestle with?
 - How do we connect isolated people better with each other and the church?

5. What hopes for the future and signs of new life is the Spirit showing us?
 - Bringing new ways to connect (tech) and reminding us of older ways (phone, cards)
 - Idea of connecting lonely with people they used to know in parish but have lost contact with
 - Hope to listen and make music together
 - Idea of having an organ concert at the church and broadcasting it through Zoom or Livestream, then equip volunteers with pads or laptops and send them out to isolated parishioners to watch the concert with them
 - Collect stories of our "living saints" and share them with the community so we don't have to wait until their funerals to hear the details of their interesting lives
 - Could interview seniors and write column to publish in a newsletter
 - Highlight more arts

One Learning: All people need to be able to hear and to listen to one another to be in community, whether they are physically together or apart. The challenge is building new hybrid models with the technology and the practices that are available to us.

One Question: How can we connect lonely people better with each other and the Church?

One Hope: Even a small group of people working together is better than one person working alone to share the Spirit!