



**Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C
Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 16)**



Lectionary citations:

Jeremiah 1:4-10 with Psalm 71:1-6 or
Isaiah 58:9b-14 with Psalm 103:1-8 and
Hebrews 12:18-29 and
Luke 13:10-17

When your internal conversation begins, “I wish my life were different,” your headaches have only just begun. This is not a quarrel that will end well. You see, when I kick into my compulsion to fix, or figure out, or correct, I see and feel mostly shame in my broken places. “Whoever I am now, is not enough”, becomes my mantra.

When we see only what we want to see, we suffer from scotoma (selective blindness).

A woman stands at a busy crosswalk, waiting for the light to change. Next to her stands a man, with a Rottweiler on a leash. Afraid of dogs, the woman's unease noticeably rises.

"Excuse me," she says to the man. "I need to tell you that I am not comfortable around dogs. So, I need to know, does your dog bite?"

"No ma'am," he answers.

The woman relaxes.

But before the light turns, the

dog reaches out and nips at her purse and arm.

"Hey," she shouts, "What's the story? You told me that your dog doesn't bite!"

"He doesn't," the man, replies.

"But this isn't my dog."

I do understand the yearning for security. We all have ideas about the way life “should be”. And if we don't have such assurance, there is someone (or some ideology or infomercial) who will tell us what we want to hear, or how to live in order to find it.

With the recent blows and heartbreaks in my world, here's what hit me: Control is overrated. We need to shift our paradigm of life... from project management to wade-in. I reread Joseph Campbell's reminder and took heart. "Where you stumble, there lies your treasure. The very cave you are afraid to enter turns out to be the source of what you are looking for. The damned thing in the cave, that was so dreaded, has become the center."

Yes, the heartbreaks—you know, the stuff of “this life”—do not remove us from life's beauty. Or from grace. Or from the sacrament of the present.

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I recently read that there are over 8,000 farmers markets in the United States each summer, and that this number is increasing rapidly. What is it that people are longing for that accounts for the growing popularity of these markets? I can think of at least three reasons.

The first is community. **Farmers markets** are communal by nature. They bring

together producers of various kinds (vegetable farmers, growers of flowers, organic meat producers, bakers, local artisans, musicians, and more) and at the same time they bring together the local community. Part of the fun of going to a farmers market is running into neighbors and friends. Since the beginning of time, food has brought people together as it is grown, gathered, cooked, and shared with others.

I think a second reason we love farmers markets is that, as the saying goes, "They are keeping it real." Most of the produce offered at farmers markets is grown without pesticides and chemical fertilizers. In a world where much of our food is processed and filled with artificial ingredients, it is all the more appealing and important to purchase and eat food that is produced the same way it has been produced for hundreds of years. Michael Pollan, author of *In Defense of Food, Cooked*, and *The Omnivore's Dilemma* captures this perfectly when he suggests, "Don't eat anything your great-grandmother wouldn't recognize as food."

The final reason that I love farmers markets is because they directly connect me with the source of the food I am eating. When I buy my produce from the grocery store, I don't have that same direct connection to the farmer and the land where the food is grown. In thanksgiving for all those who make healthy food possible I find another quote from Michael Pollan to be appropriate, "Whenever possible, shake the hand that feeds you."

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Lion King

By now it is probably moot to ask why remake a classic, the answers being first, commercial; second, a new audience will see the story on a big screen (and for extra bucks in 3D); and third, a classic is always open to fresh interpretations, as is the play that inspired the original *Lion King*, Shakespeare's "Hamlet.:

The same holds true for Scripture; we need to experience the 'stories' in the now. For instance: the bent over woman. In Jesus day women were property, enough to make one bent over and today what issues do women have: the following week is about where to place yourself at a feast; how important do you feel? Following that we have what you must leave to be a disciple, quite the challenge and what is the challenge today? Then on what some call 'Back to Church' Sunday we have the story about being lost. It is so easy to recite the literal story from Scripture without the relevant interpretation for today. Always, we need to put the story in the here and now to make the Scripture come alive and relevant to today. There has to be application to the here and now.

Recall the Gospel about setting mother against daughter . . . so easy to write that one off as a 'Jesus was having a bad day' story when the reality is true: each generation has its likes and dislikes OR more appropriately what they like because it is from their 'day' and change is difficult.

"Morning Has Broken"

Gratefully offer
talents and service,
Meeting the challenge of this
new day,
Partners in mission,
Working with vision,
Strengthen Christ's Body in a
new way.

Faithfully serving
all of God's children,
Telling our stories,
listening to theirs,
Teaching, upholding,
With love enfolding,
Sharing each other's burdens
and cares.

Joyfully praising, learning,
supporting,
Finding new paths of service
and prayer,
Led by the Spirit,
Life we inherit,
Giving God glory now
everywhere.

-Jane Parker Huber

Stuck at home and want to read: Michael S. Roth is president of Wesleyan University. His most recent books are "*Safe Enough Spaces: A Pragmatist's Approach to Inclusion, Free Speech, and Political Correctness on College Campuses,*" and "*Beyond the University: Why Liberal Education Matters.*"