

Sanctuary for the Soul – Rev. Jennifer Hamlin-Navias

October 7, 2018

Beloveds, for you are beloved, in all that you are you are beloved, it has been a hard couple of weeks in what has been a really hard 2 years. I feel battered and worn, soul weary really. My faith is stretched – not yet broken, but definitely stretched.

Originally, I was going to preach on Syracuse abolitionists today and then there was the Dr. Ford's testimony and I knew I had to change my plans. I have spoken to so many of you who are also feeling battered and worn and soul weary.

Our theme this month is Sanctuary pretty timely really. It is my hope that this service is a bit of sanctuary for us all. This sermon will be short because more important than words are acts of blessing and healing and those will happen in just a bit in our service.

Here we are gathered in our sanctuary – our sacred place, made sacred by the practice that we have to gather here with each other, to listen, to question, to pray, to sing, to be with each other to support one another. Babies have been blessed in this space, families blessed too. We have said goodbye to those who have passed over. We welcome new members here too, folks who are courageous, curious and quirky enough to join with us. We hug each other, grumble at each other too in this space. For this is no perfect sanctuary but it is our sanctuary – our sacred place.

We are a community of activist and activist supporters but that is not what is at the center of our community. Our center is – literally our sanctuary. This is the place where we gather to reconnect with our divine, ourselves and each other. We do that for many reasons but one of them is that it is part of what supports us to keep on keeping on.

And we need that so much right now, the world needs that so much right now.

Have you heard about the spoon theory? The **spoon theory** is a metaphor used to explain the reduced amount of energy available for activities of living and productive tasks that may result from disability or chronic illness. "Spoons" are a visual representation used as a unit of measure in order to quantify how much energy a person has throughout a given day. Each activity requires a given number of spoons, which will only be replaced as the person "recharges" through rest. A person who runs out of spoons has no choice but to rest until their spoons are replenished.

Spoon theory was created in order to explain what it was like to live with any disability – and it is a useful metaphor for anyone who isn't at the center of the white cisheteropatriarchy. This past couple of weeks it has become evident to me that those of us who are fighting against the patriarchy, for those of us who hate the patriarchy – we are low on spoons or out of spoons.

Rv. Ashley Horan said it better than I ever could:

There is so much terrible, beautiful mourning and testifying and witnessing to the terrors of patriarchy and sexual violence (and the other oppressive systems misogyny props up and colludes with). It's happening out loud and in private, across restaurant booths and on the internet and in restroom conversations and during family dinners. And no matter how the truth of these testimonies lands on us, and our histories and our bodies, there is something powerful happening.

AND.

I just keep thinking: "What would happen if, instead of having to expend the emotional and physical and spiritual energy to speak truth to power, we--women and femmes and [trans, non-binary gender non-conforming] folks and queers and people of color and immigrants and disabled folks and every other group who isn't at the center of the

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white cisheteropatriarchy--were able to devote that same courage, that same yearning, that same loving energy to living into another way of being? What if we didn't have to use all our spoons to resist and critique, but rather to reimagine and create?"

I believe--truly--that any damn thing would be possible.

So, in that spirit, [and in the spirit of no longer caring about] ~~and the spirit of having Exactly Zero Fucks left to give about~~ respectability politics and "reasoned" dialogue, I am aspiring to do the healing--personal and communal--necessary to free up all that energy and imagination and do a new thing. If you are too tired and re-traumatized and triggered to hold that aspiration with me today or any day, please know I love you and I'm with you and I and so many others who have a little more to give right now are holding the space for you to be wherever you need to be right now.

We'll take this shift.

Beloveds That is sanctuary in this time of tumult

I think I have lost my hope but I have not lost my sanctuary. I have not lost you beloveds. For truly this sanctuary is not THE sanctuary – you, we together are THE sanctuary and this space is what physically holds us.

Being a sanctuary is justice work. When the white cisheteropatriarchy batters you, when the daily micro-aggressions and macro aggressions wear you down, when you have no spoons left, when you think evil has won – then there is the sanctuary of us. A place to be, to heal, to slow one's breath and still one's heart, to gather a bit of energy. There is nothing more counter cultural than that beloveds. In a world ruled by white cisheteropatriarchy for us to say no not here not now. Here we value each and every one, here we promise to bring our best selves, here we promise to hold you up when you are too tired to hold yourself up, here we promise to share spoons with one another, here we promise to covenant together and when we break that covenant and each of us will we promise to come back to the table, or stay at the table and find a way through it might not be my way, it might not be your way but it will be our way

Sanctuary is the center of Beloved Community, it is the center of our faith, it is the center of our work. Here may we find love courage and healing in a world without end may it be so.

Rev Teresa Soto

I need you to know
that there is nothing
wrong with you, if you
find the world congealed
and unwieldy. You were
never meant to serve money,
to give loyalty to unprincipled
power, to spend your joy
frantically soothing yourself
in order to tend wounds
of being constantly
dehumanized. I need you
to know that your sense
of injury and anger is not
overdeveloped. You are meant
for love and beauty. You belong

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where you are known and
where your future is not just a
resource, but a promise, which
you begin to fulfill by being
unmistakably, irrevocably
yourself.

—you are not wrong.

Rev. Meg Riley

Agency is the opposite of helplessness, so experiencing agency in any form also helps to get out of the triggered response. So, doing something like choosing to put on music and dance or cooking or hugging a pet or anything else that we choose to do can reinforce that we have power to choose something. Preferably something we really like.