

THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

July 7, 2024



HOME

everything always changes

by Drew Downs

Driving back to my alma mater two weeks ago brought the twin sensations of wanting the familiarity to make me feel comfortable and for new things to inspire me. I parked my car where I had parked it when I lived in that dorm 25 years earlier.

New buildings and renovations pushed against my nostalgia, rendering the old familiarity more tenuous. And yet, I was excited by development and growth, too.

Our bodies ache when we return home, don't they? A twin longing to be back there and yet, also here, now.

Like the campus, much about me has changed. What I think we long to name is that grasp of what *feels* eternal and changeless. Who feels the same as that 18 year-old, even when we know we aren't. We need a language for that through line of change, of growth, of becoming and coming home.

ORDINARY TIME

2024

WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

Independence

As hundreds of Episcopalians from all over the country (and beyond!) gathered in Louisville last week, I doubt many felt completely alone. Even my friend, Layla, who wore disappointment like sackcloth for the Palestinian people knew that her aspirations were dependent on legislation and persuasion. That we need shared commitments to realize a ceasefire.

I worry about that sensation to go-it-alone. It is always the ultimate desire in euchre; it means you have a near-perfect hand. A hand so good that you don't need a partner. And if you win every hand, you get twice as many points. As a game, euchre rewards the delusion that we don't need other people.

The same goes for literature and pop psychology. We know that William Golding's 1954 novel, *Lord of the Flies* is fiction. And yet we treat its premise like fact. That people, when stuck together, do horrible things. History proves the opposite. When a group of young boys were stranded on an island, they *created* civilization. It didn't erode. They saved each other. They were *dependent* on each other.

Our tradition is built around mutual dependence. We are dependent on God and one another in the same way that we are called to love one another.

Perhaps it is because we know our dependence that we lionize independence. It seems more like a willful forgetting, though. Like a deep desire to push away or distrust. Our work is not to distrust, but to figure out how we might learn to trust.

With love,
Drew

ORDINARY TIME

2024

FOR SUNDAY

Proper 9B

July 7, 2024

Collect

○ God, you have taught us to keep all your commandments by loving you and our neighbor: Grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit, that we may be devoted to you with our whole heart, and united to one another with pure affection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Reading

Mark 6:1-13

Jesus came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

ORDINARY TIME

Reflection

There is a familiar trope about returning home. It can be summed up as: don't. Or, like, don't expect much from it. People don't know who you are, just who you were.

One of the signs of the disconnect between home and the world is often what they call you. For me, going back to where I grew up or visiting extended family are the only times I'm known as Andrew. Well, that and telemarketers.

There is an interesting dichotomy here between people who are familiar with you and people who know you now. There is a kind of knowing that is present and another that exists in the present as a reflection only of the past. Of knowing someone in their childhood and not in their adulthood.

The evangelist moves from this story of knowing straight into his sending out of the disciples as apostles. It is a moment of great promise and trust. And it reflects a bit of the same sense of growth and change over time, I think.

Nazareth isn't the disciple's home exactly; they come from throughout the wider region. But Jesus is sending them out as students and they come home as something more like masters.

There is a change in them. It is significant and substantial. And yet they remain the same person in nearly any way those words matter. Peter is still Peter, for instance. He possess the same eagerness and devotion. The substance of the man is quite like the man he was at the start. And yet he has grown, learned, and therefore, changed.

I suspect it is like a parent who is frustrated at the growth of their children or the surprise we have when we see each other's kids after a few months/years/decades. Shock and tiny bit of horror that they are so grown. Because the idea that we actually stay the same, *completely the same*, is only an illusion.

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