

REFLECTIONS on TRANSITIONS

TRANSITION: noun: movement, passage, or change from one position, state, stage, subject, concept, etc, to another.

Thesaurus: change; evolution; conversion; shift; move; switch; alteration; modification

St. Teresa's Prayer

May today there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise, and love.

It is there for each and every one of us. Amen.

Times of transition are strenuous, but I love them. They are an opportunity to purge, rethink priorities, and be intentional about new habits. We can make our new normal any way we want. (Kristin Armstrong)

ABRAHAM: STORY OF A GRAND TRANSITION

The Lord said to Abram, "Leave your country, your kindred and your father's house for a country which I shall show you. And I shall make you a great nation, I shall bless you and make your name famous; you are to be a blessing!" (Genesis 12: 1-2)



"Obedience to God's command to go requires that Abraham be willing to sacrifice what seem to be the sources of orientation, security, conform, and meaning in his life...biblical journeys also involve alterations in the travelers' mental landscape, in the 'givens' that provide their sense of order and control over life. As they move into new territory, they become aware that God is encouraging them to rearrange their priorities, to change ingrained attitudes, to jettison cherished perceptions and personal opinions, and to accept, at long last, realities that they have denied for their entire adult life." (Elizabeth Nagel. Be a Blessing. Paulist: Mahwah, NJ, 2006, p. 5, 8)

PASSOVER of ISRAEL: STORY OF A LOOOONG TRANSITION

When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. (Deut 26:6-10)

For the people of Israel, this phase of the process lasted forty years and took place in a desert! When you realize Egypt and the Promised land are about the same distance apart as Chicago and Cincinnati, you have to wonder why the Israelites covered only about six miles per year. They were clearly a people confused. As joyful as they were to be free, they were baffled about their future. They even talked of returning to their oppressors (see Exodus 14: 12), a syndrome sometimes observed in battered women. Fear of the unknown often outweighs the fear of a known evil. (Joe Paprocki. Under the Influence of Jesus. Chicago: Loyola, 2014, page 115)

RUTH AND NAOMI: TRANSITIONS TO “WHEREVER”

Ruth said to Naomi, “do not press me to leave you and to stop going with you, for wherever you go, I shall go, wherever you live, I shall live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.” (Ruth 1: 16)

Ruth and Naomi face great changes in their lives. They can do everything possible to minimize them to deny them, to ignore them, or they can see them for what they are: God’s invitations to development. Change and loss, it must be realized, are two different things. Loss takes something away from life. Change adds something to it. Loss is a black well; change is a fork in the road. Loss is not an option; it is a necessary and inevitable part of life. Change, on the other hand, is only a possibility. It can be resisted or embraced. It can be seen as temptation or as grace. It can be borne reluctantly or it can be chose.” (Joan Chittister. The Story of Ruth. Ottawa: Novalis, 2000, 17)



THE TRANSFIGURATION: TRANSITION FROM MOUNTAINTOP TO MESS

And behold, two men talked with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure (exodus) which he was to fulfill in Jerusalem. (Luke 9:30-31)

Peter and his companions were heavy with sleep, but they woke up and saw Jesus' glory and the two men standing with him. As these were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. He did not know what he was saying. (Luke 9:33-34)



An idea: why isn't August 6 [Feast of the Transfiguration] named a holy day in honor of the transfiguration in the universal Church as a day of prayer for peace? It would be appropriate to pray for personal transfiguration. (Lawrence Cunningham. Things Seen and Unseen. Notre Dame: Sorin Books, 2010, 138)

THE PASSEOVER OF JESUS: TRANSITION FROM DEATH TO LIFE

When the days were being fulfilled for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51)

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. (John 13:1)

Life and death are a single mystery. That is what the Paschal Mystery teaches us. Death is inevitable – but so is resurrection. We can be sure that dyings will intrude upon our lives, and we may have some choice about how we can respond to their coming. We can be awake and watchful for the resurrections as well, for the creative ways that new life streams into our lives even in the midst of death. Like supernova explosions that shatter every recognizable fragment of life, we are capable of transcendence, capable of never allowing death to have the final say.
Juday Cannato. Radical Amazement. Notre Dame: Sorin Books, 2006, page12)

PRAYER and REFLECTION

Lord, take me where you want me to go,
Let me meet whom you want me to meet,
Tell me what to say, and
Keep me out of your way. Amen.
(Father Mychal Judge)

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In out-of-the-way places of the heart,
Where your thoughts never think to wander,
This beginning has been quietly forming,
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.

...

Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.

(taken from "FOR A NEW BEGINNING" by John O'Donohue. To Bless the Space Between Us. A Book of Blessings. New York: Doubleday, 2008, page 14)

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Review the various transition stories and prayers. Highlight any words or phrases that could serve as a guide for how your own transitions can be times of grace and life. What specific actions, attitudes or relationships flow from this guide?

Can you think of anyone who is a good role model for you of dealing with transitions in a positive way? Why is that person a good model?

If you are inspired... write a poem (a haiku or other) or a prayer about transitions.