

## **Homily - Song of the True Self**

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Today I am going to start by reading you the Song of the True Self. You may recall from last week's sermon, we all begin with a False Self that needs to be built and then pass away so that we can reveal our True Self, our resurrected self. Here are the words of the Song.

"Within us there is an inner, natural dignity. (You often see it in older folks.)  
An inherent worthiness that already knows and enjoys. (You see it in children.)  
It is an immortal diamond waiting to be mined and is never discovered undesired.  
It is a reverence humming within you that must be honored.  
Call it the soul, the unconscious, deep consciousness, or the indwelling Holy Spirit.  
Call it nothing.  
It does not need the right name or right religion to show itself.  
It does not even need to be understood.  
It is usually wordless.  
It just is, and shows itself best when we are silent, or in love, or both.  
I will call it the True Self here.  
It is God-in-All-Things yet not circumscribed by any one thing.  
It is enjoyed only when each part is in union with all other parts, because only then does it stand in the full truth.  
Once in a while, this True Self becomes radiant and highly visible in one lovely place or person.  
Superbly so, and for all to see, in the body of the Risen Christ.  
And note that I did say "body."  
It begins here and now in our embodied state in this world.  
Thus, the Christ Mystery travels the roads of time.  
Once you have encountered this True Self—and once is more than enough—the False Self will begin to fall away on its own.  
This will take most of your life, however, just as it did in Jesus."

This is the Song of the True Self as written by Fr. Richard Rohr, and I begin with this song since it is such a beautiful summary of the Wisdom Pattern – the pattern of order, disorder, and reorder. A pattern that God has written into every part of the universe, and written into each of us as well. In this life time, not all have this movement from order to disorder to reorder, because some get stuck in the first stage. Or, some have such a hard time with the disorder that they go back to the first stage of the False Self. But, some, and you know them when you encounter them, some move from disorder to the True Self, the resurrected self. And, if you don't do it in this life time, then I believe that all move to the True Self with the death of our bodies. When we die we are resurrected and connected to all other things in the universe. We are connected to Christ in ways that we can scarcely understand.

A little over a week ago, long-time parishioner, Terry Grant died. I think she is one who achieved her True Self during her ninety-six years here on this earth. I don't know when

she achieved it, but she did. And if she hadn't, then Jesus assures us that she would have achieved it with her death. Of this we believe. Of this we know. Of this we trust. That is what makes us followers of Jesus and a people of the resurrection. Some are connected to all else in this life time, and all the rest receive this gift at death. Our goal here at St. Barnabas is to assure you of this gift that we all have from God, and to help you reveal your True Self in this lifetime.

Today's Gospel reading is another Song of the True Self but this time it is said by Jesus to his friends. "Abide in my love... I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be completed. This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you... Go and bear fruit... love one another." Today's reading is a wonderful summary of the entire ministry of Jesus. And it is a wonderful summary of who we are meant to be in our True Selves. When we abide in the love of Jesus then we know that this love is sufficient and complete. All those other things that seemed so important to the False Self become insignificant. When we abide in God's love, then the God in you already knows, loves, and serves God in everything else. When we abide in the love of Christ then we know four things. We know we are divinely conceived. We believe that we are the beloved of God. We trust that our descent into disorder and death is not the end. And, we know that on the other side of death is resurrection and new life. And when we abide in love then we know these four things are not only true about ourselves, but they are true about the rest of humanity, and creation itself. Our resurrected selves see all of the resurrection that is surrounding us. In our True Self we value and see purpose in our relationship with God, others, self, and the rest of non-human creation. In this way we are grounded in Christ and abiding in love.

Last week I shared a whole host of spiritual practices that you can download with my sermon from our parish website. These and other spiritual practices will help aid your journey to a resurrected or True Self. This week, I want to share another two spiritual practices with you that I have learned about in my online class on Compassionate Integrity. This class and these practices are taught by the Life University Center for Compassion, Integrity, and Secular Ethics. The two spiritual practices from the class that I want to share are Tracking and Resourcing. Both help calm our bodies.

Now, last year I shared the three-fold way of knowing – we know with our minds, our hearts, and our bodies or moving centers. The least developed of these for most of us, including myself, is this last way of knowing, knowing through our bodies or moving centers. So, one of the foundational practices for our spiritual journey is the ability to calm the body. "It is important to pay attention to our bodies, because our nervous systems react to external and internal stimuli very quickly. As such, our difficult emotions and thoughts often begin as bodily sensations. These bodily sensations can be the leading indicators of stress, anxiety, fear and depression. Our bodies can also alert us to our states of joy, calm and clarity.

The practice of noticing sensations in the body is called "Tracking." Normally, we tend to use feeling and emotion words to describe what state we are in. For instance when someone

asks us, "How are you today?" we might say, "I'm feeling good," or "I'm feeling sad." Rarely do we spend time acknowledging the physical sensations that are associated with "feeling good" or "feeling sad." We can learn to do so, however, and developing this skill is enormously helpful in allowing us to know what state our body is in. Being able to recognize a warm sensation in the chest radiating out, or butterflies in one's stomach, or the tightening or loosening of muscles gives us information about the body. As we learn about our bodies, we develop "body literacy." We notice that our bodies are experiencing a whole host of sensations at every moment. Each sensation is giving us information about the state of our body.

Again, Tracking is the act of noticing the physical sensations that are occurring within the body in the present moment. It also involves recognizing if they are pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. If the sensation is pleasant or neutral, we can simply notice the sensation and then remain with it for a few moments. This period of remaining with the sensation helps our body recognize well-being. If the sensation is unpleasant, then we can redirect our attention, finding a place in the body that is pleasant, neutral or just somewhere that is less unpleasant than the original sensation. If we have chronic pain or discomfort across the body, there may be no place in the body that is pleasant or neutral, but there might be places in the body that are less unpleasant than other places, and we can place our attention there. Again this spiritual practice is called Tracking, and it is good for calming the body, a state which is foundational for spiritual development.

The second practice I want to share from my class is Resourcing. This is a practice that is an effective way to heal the trauma that is stored within our bodies. With the Resourcing Spiritual Practice we come up with an external, internal or imagined resource that brings about a state of greater well-being, safety or security. External resources can be a memory, place or person that makes you feel better, or an activity such as jogging, biking or swimming, that gives you a sense of greater well-being while you are engaging in it. Internal resources can be a part of oneself, like a characteristic one has (such as a sense of humor) or a part of one's body that is strong or healthy. Resources can be unique to each of us, and we can have multiple resources.

To practice Resourcing, one brings the resource to mind as vividly as possible. The more detail that can be attributed to the resource, the stronger its effect. Recalling smells, sounds, tastes, physical sensations and colors will allow the resource to grow and strengthen. Once the resource is vivid, keep it in mind and engage in tracking — that is, notice what is happening inside the body in the present moment. Oftentimes, people mistakenly think resourcing involves thinking about how you felt when the event in your memory actually took place. But actually this practice involves noticing what is happening in one's body in the very moment that one is thinking of the resource. Resources should be things that make us feel a bit better or safer when we think of them."

When I first started this spiritual practice of Resourcing, I used Ben the Dog as my resource. He was sitting at my feet, being cute, and as I thought of Ben the Dog I got that expansive light feeling. So for a few practices, I tried using Ben as my resource, and then I

remembered that Ben is going to die at some point. The instructor of the class called this a split resource when you have both positive and not so positive thoughts. So, then next time I practiced Resourcing I thought of a prior pet, Samantha the Cat. At one time Samantha was lost for four days and I remember the joy when I found her in a bush on the other side of the townhouse complex. So, when my body started remembering trauma I would ground my thought on Samantha the Cat. Then the instructor said we should have more than one resource, so I spent some time thinking about this. And finally, I decided to use Jesus as my resource. One might think that I would have come up with Jesus right away, but now when I do the spiritual practice of Resourcing, I imagine being with Jesus. I abide in his love. One nice thing about using Jesus is that I can place myself with him when he is teaching, walking on water, on the Cross, or after the empty tomb. I can abide in the boundless love of Jesus, and can use that love to help me heal from trauma and calm the body. Try it.

Let me end today with another Song of the True Self by the thirteenth century Persian poet, Rumi.

"Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing  
and right doing, there is a field.  
I'll meet you there.  
When the soul lies down in that grass  
the world is too full to talk about."

Over the next three months while I am gone, I pray that you abide in God's love and know that you are the beloved of God.