

## ***Holy Interference***

A sermon shared with the congregation of St. Andrew's United Church

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by Rev. Dave Le Grand

Autumn Peltier, for the few of us who don't know,<sup>1</sup> lives in Wikwemikong on Manitoulin Island and her great aunt was a water protector. Autumn herself became a water protector. She understands deeply, how sacred water is, and how the people of Turtle Island, North America, are poisoning the water.



The elders of the Anishnabek nation made her the chief water commissioner for the Anishnabek Nation, which means that she speaks on behalf of 40 First Nations in Ontario, many who live with “boil water” orders regularly. Strangely echoing the prophets of ancient times, Autumn's message is simple, “time is running out!” It keeps her up at night thinking about it.

I remember from university biology the concept of homeostasis.<sup>2</sup> A big Latin word for how living creatures, especially humans, try to maintain a steady state, enjoying a peaceful, regular, existence. If something or someone interferes with that state, the body tries to correct the problem, resists the disruption. Interference is not an enjoyable experience. Anyone remember before cable/satellite television – antennas? Remember having to rotate the big antenna or little rabbit ears to get rid of static so that we can watch one of 5 stations?



Here is another example of interference. A calm pond. Relaxing. But drop a stone into that pond, and the waves radiate out, creating chaos. A cute experiment for us, perhaps a bit more dramatic for creatures living in that area of the pond.

Imagine Jesus arriving at the Temple just prior to Passover. The usual activities going on there. Pilgrims peruse the stalls, bartering with the tradespeople and seeking priests to complete sacrificial rituals. Moneychangers exchanged denarii into half-shekels so pilgrims could pay the temple-tax.<sup>3</sup> Jewish faithful are busy preparing for an important holy holiday, to be frank. It was anything but calm there, but there was homeostasis, and Jesus dropped the spiritual stone in the Temple pond that day.

The Gospel storyteller this time is John, and the narrator John observes that, as Jesus was having his meltdown, the disciples were remembering sacred scripture, Psalm 69 of their Jewish Scriptures, that says: Praising God in song, the psalmist concludes, is more valuable than “an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs.”<sup>4</sup> Later in John's Gospel,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/kidsnews/post/watch-teen-activist-autumn-peltier-demands-clean-drinking-water-for-all>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/what-is-homeostasis/>

<sup>3</sup> Alicia D. Myers, <https://www.workingpreacher.org>, March 7, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

Jesus will be quoting again from this same Psalm. The point being, God's love is there, among the faithful, they are too busy with their routines, keeping homeostasis.

God's love is here, with us, among us, even in our disrupted lives. We have created new normal, new routines. Many times we need that comfort, that peace, those routines, and new routines in these isolating, stressful times. But there are times when our routines *need* some Holy Interference. I wonder what routines you and I might have, patterns that endure harm rather than building one another up. Views of our world and Creation that seek to subjugate rather than making time to feel wonder at what God has entrusted to us. Holy Love, disrupt our lives today. Amen.