

Showing Up

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

April 7, 2024

by Rev. Dave Le Grand

Franciscan Friar and theologian Richard Rohr talks about a theory that sees spiritual development as evolving in each of us, especially in adulthood.¹ In this theory we start by *Cleaning Up*² – where we get preoccupied with our private moral perfection, our attention on ourselves. Some churches, in their prayers, and hymns, focus on “me” – God and *me*, Jesus and *me*. I love you Jesus. God you love *me*, with less awareness of how God loves community, our world outside our walls.

The spiritual evolution Richard Rohr speaks of moves from *Cleaning Up* to *Growing Up* – we mature emotionally, psychologically. Then, there is *Waking Up*, where we spend less time in a spiritual echo chamber, and realize that we are part of something magnificently interdependent. We let go of our need to control, manage, or even predict the future. We surrender in love to be part whatever God has in store.

Finally, in the spiritual evolution concept, is *Showing Up*. Rohr sees this as a stage where we engage with the world – with our hearts and minds. Being there for people, stepping out of our comfort zones in care for a cause, or for a specific person.

Peter, dear Peter, is truly a passionate and earnest person. He jumps out of the boat with little thought. Remember at that Passover dinner where Peter gets defensive when Jesus tries to wash his feet? He says, in essence, “Well, I guess you’d better wash all of me, then, Jesus!” That sounds like a person still spiritually a work in progress. Like us. All of us, I imagine. Me for sure!

Where might you be in that spiritual evolution scheme? Where might St. Andrew's as a community be?

I want to share with you a glimpse of what I saw and heard yesterday as we talked about St. Andrew's, and particularly the amazing stories that you the congregation, the heart and soul of St. Andrew's, shared in those Zoom conversations with Jill and Ron. Amazing stories of how transformative St. Andrew's has been, and still is being in newcomers' experience of this community.

We are grieving, too though, as we remember nostalgically, and wonder, feeling a bit uncertain about the future. Are we like Peter the day after Jesus is died, out working again? There he is, Peter, today in the Reading, fishing. Life goes on. But we are evolving, whether we want to be changing or not. We at St. Andrew's continue to meet, we worship on Sundays, and, on April 21 we will gather all our stakeholders as we must, annually, in our Church and Place, holding our Annual General Meetings.

We are growing up, I think – not growing in an economic or numbers model, or by a simplistic standard of success. We are *Growing Up* in the sense of letting go – letting go of what was, taking from those experiences the tools we need for when we Show Up. So, let's let our senses tingle, our hearts open as wide as we dare let them be. Our minds as curious as possible, wondering: Where is the risen Christ showing up? Amen.

¹ This concept comes from the Sermon Planning Guide A Sermon Planning Guide for Lent-Easter Featuring Biblical commentary by

Dr. Terence Lester & Rev. Dr. Karoline Lewis Guide developed by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity. Sanctifiedart.org

² This material thanks to Adapted from Richard Rohr, “Four Stages,” homily, May 26, 2019; and “Four Shapes to Transformation,” “Transformation,” Oneing, vol. 5, no. 1 (CAC Publishing: 2017), 39–45.

1 *Showing Up* based on John chapter 21, verses 1 to 19 2nd of the Easter Season April 7, 2024