



MAY 2023 PRESIDENT'S LETTER

WAKING UP

“Contemplation is about waking up. To be contemplative is to experience an event fully, in all its aspects.” Richard Rolheiser in *The Shattered Lantern*

The month of April was a very busy time. I am a retired deacon but involved in several ministries in my congregation. I have volunteer roles in my community as well, and family responsibilities. Holy Week and Easter were a blur. I moved from one activity to the next, without fully appreciating or experiencing each one. I look back on that time and couldn't remember too many specifics because the pace of life and ministry was going at warp speed.

There is a belief that the faster we move, the more we do, the more we can produce and get done. There may be no opportunity to slow down outside of days off or vacation time, and even those are hard to do in ministry. When I am on vacation, especially to somewhere I've never been before, I want to see and do as much as possible, and often overload the schedule. I return home more tired than when I left. I am learning gradually in retirement to slow down, take time, and be more prayerful with my activities.

We can lose experiences or relationships in our mad rush to do more, experience more, accomplish more. The quote above on contemplation can guide us as we enter moments with awareness and presence and prayerful attention. The interview featured this month is with a close friend of mine, Alison Gale. My brother-in-law (now deceased) was the caregiver for Alison's daughter, Linnea. My brother-in-law knew how to be fully present in the moment with Linnea, who you learn more about in the interview. He was fully attentive to her, fully present, and cared for her in a very powerful spiritual way.

How often are we able to do this in our lives and ministries? How might we wake up to that moment, and that moment only? To not think about what happened in the last meeting, or think ahead to the next event, or whatever task is on our to do list? God is present in every moment. Contemplation opens us to that moment, or that person, or that event in a way that isn't possible if we are not paying attention. Contemplation can happen during busy times, as we see with new eyes what is happening around us.

Doing is important in life and ministry. Being in the moment is also important because we connect with one another and God in deep ways. I am discovering I get more done if I take a few moments for a breath prayer, or to look at nature, or listening fully to someone. As we transition from the Easter season to the Pentecost season, may we enter deeper experiences with the Holy Spirit, including contemplation.

Present with you on the journey, and paying attention,

Diane McGeoch

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“...that they may be encouraged
in heart and united in love...”

Colossians 2.2 (NIV)