

Please Pray With Me.

Opening Prayer: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Amen. Please be seated.

Friends, there is so much to be done. As a community, as individuals, and as a society, there is just so much we all need to do right now. We have neighbors to feed, events to put on, and earth to care for. I have papers to write, projects to organize, and more than a few readings to catch up on. We're heading into Advent in the coming days, and we'll all have holiday preparations to complete: packages to wrap, yummy dishes to make, and trips to the store that always seem to take longer than we anticipated. As you sit here today, I'm sure you can think up at least a short to-do list without much effort because there's nearly always something that needs doing right about now.

And.

And the most important thing to attend to is sometimes the most difficult one of all. To be still, to ask for God's guidance and to

allow the time and posture with which we can receive it. If we are not making that room, even if it means releasing our grip on the things that seem so pressing and important for a few moments, then how can we say that we are doing these actions in the name of Christ? How else, if we do not do the difficult and often uncomfortable work of making room for God's presence in our lives, do we expect to know the truth, to abide in the truth, and to live out the truth in the world around us?

But why does something as simple as pausing and turning to God seem so nearly impossible for many of us? Because it is actually hard and holy work. Unfortunately, We aren't all gifted with flaming shrubbery like Moses to pull us out of our distraction and into communication with God.

This is hard, for me first and foremost, because it often doesn't look like we're even doing anything at all. It often looks, for me, like moments of intentional silence, quiet and often repetitive personal prayers, or just putting down my phone and turning off my laptop for a few minutes where I am not consuming any external content. This is hard, because the world

is so brutally loud in its offerings of fun, exciting, and even seemingly soothing content for our constant consumption. This is hard because, and again I'll be the first to admit my guilt in this, it is really tempting to live a life of constant distraction in an attempt to keep our heads above water, especially when our souls and minds are unsettled. This is hard because of how tempting and easy it is for us to get caught up in the lie that in our own doing we can control this fickle and confusing world. This is hard because it can take serious effort to pause, to breathe, and for even a moment to do nothing but be.

We hear at the end of today's Gospel, from the mouth of Jesus himself, that Jesus came into this world to testify to the truth and that one who belongs to the truth listens to his voice. Indeed, just a few chapters ago in this same Gospel, Jesus answered his disciple Thomas' question about knowing how to follow the way by saying that it is Jesus himself who is the way, the truth, and the life. Understanding this, by the simple work of logic games, means that to know the truth means to know Christ Jesus, and to know Christ Jesus means to know the truth. Here, we find the real work of Discernment. To know what God is asking us to do, whether individually, in our families, or here in

the life of Church of the Resurrection, we must first remember the truth that allows us access to knowing God, and that is Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected, the very truth we are ultimately seeking. This isn't a dead truth, but in the power of the resurrection is a truth that lives with us now and always. It calls us out of our complacencies and structures into the beauty of being Christians, that is followers of Christ. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are meant, by the very nature of who our living Savior is, to listen for his voice as it works in and through us by the Holy Spirit.

This is the reminder we must hold tight to, before and during all the doing that begs to be done. We must cling to the truth of God in Christ first and foremost, forsaking all else in the search for what we are truly being called to do with these lives we have been gifted. This kind of Christ-centric and Christ-driven discernment *may* lead us back to the same place we started from (and what a beautiful affirmation that is), it *may* call us out into uncharted and unexpected waters (and what a beautiful challenge to take on with Christ's help), or it *may* lead us to sit with our questions, concerns, and fears a little longer

(and what a beautiful way to let God prepare our path first).

Now, friends, here is the very best news of all—the comfort in the uncomfortable. The very best news is that even when we pause, even as we make space and pause our doing to seek out Christ’s voice, God is still doing the work. We do not have to strive endlessly because we have a God who puts all things right in God’s time. We can pause because God is at work even when we aren’t.

So, wherever the work of making room for discernment in our lives leads, it is good and holy work because it attempts to reconnect again and again to the wellspring of truth that is Jesus Christ. And what a beautiful calling that is for us all. Amen.