

“Holy Moments:

Celebrating the Gifts of Life”

A sermon by Pastor Steve Easterday-McPadden
for First UMC, Grand Junction, Sunday, July 12, 2020

This sermon can be listened to on the FUMCGJ

website: www.fumcgj.org/sermons-2/

Scripture Text: Luke 12:27; Psalm 148:7-13 [NLT]

OPENING – A Reminder of Celtic Christian Origins and Basic Principles

[Source: Trevor Miller of the Northumbria Community.

<https://www.northumbriacommunity.org/articles/celtic-spirituality-a-beginners-guide/>]

- Origins

Cornwall

Wales

Cumbria

SW Scotland

Isle of Man, and

the whole of Ireland.



- Basic Principles: A holistic spirituality

- Emphasizing the opportunity to encounter God in the everyday, ordinariness of life
- Resistant to separating the sacred from the secular, the spiritual from the physical. Rather, all of life is seen as sacred, revelatory of the presence of God in all things.

SERMON THOUGHTS

(*Make reference back to the Scripture readings for today as the unifying theme here.*)

I. The Heart of Celtic Spirituality: Spiritual Practices

[Source: U.S. Catholic. <https://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201905/12-celtic-spiritual-practices-celebrate-god-our-world-31727>]

Walking the rounds

A central Celtic practice at sacred sites, such as churches, graves, crosses, and holy wells, is known as “walking the rounds.”

This involves walking sun-wise (or clockwise) in a mindful way around various markers or monuments. The number of rounds varies but is **often three** to reflect the sacredness of that number in the Celtic imagination. There are pattern days associated with different holy places and a set number of rounds to walk in specific places along with certain prayers.

Walking helps to arrive to a place and slow down. Walking in a circular manner helps to move us out of linear ways of thinking and to open our hearts to receive God’s grace.

Scripture meditation

When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”
—Exodus 3:4–5

AND...

Three essential things (next page)

Three essential things

Three is a sacred number in the Celtic tradition, and often the saints expressed their own desires or commitments in terms of the number three.

- St. Columba of Iona asked God for three things: **virginity, wisdom, and pilgrimage.**
- St. Ita of Killeedy focused on **faith, simplicity, and generosity.**

Each is a **variation on wisdom** for the three essential things one must do in life.

None of the monks say the same three things, which open us up to the possibility that what is essential to one person will be different...[for] another. Similarly, in different seasons of life, what is essential for us might change.

Scripture meditation

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but (1) to do justice, and (2) to love kindness,
and (3) to walk humbly with your God?*
—Micah 6:8

- ✓ Sabbath Day
- ✓ A Bird Nest
- ✓ Summer Day
- ✓ Sitting with an Aging Pet
- ✓ Sowing Seed
- ✓ Washing Dishes

(*Set up our story of the robin “family” and read the poem, “A Blessing of a Bird Nest”*), coordinated with this blessing:

A Blessing of a Bird Nest

So fragile, this nest
[Perched atop the ladder,
leaning against the wall]
Barely sheltered from the
wind and the rain



So fragile, these eggs,
Life growing within,

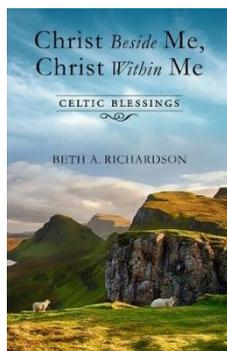


Nurtured by the warmth
Of mother's...[and father's] body



II. Beth Richardson and *Christ Beside Me, Christ Within Me*

- Ideas around Beth's "Bless to me ____" prayers
- The list for this segment: Holy Moments, "Bless to me ____" prayers for
 - ✓ Walking the Dog
 - ✓ Morning Coffee



Life begins,



Life grows,
Life comes forth
From miraculous beginnings



Shelter these lives,
Great God of creation,



Source of all that has
been,



All that is,



And all that is to come.



Thank you, Creator,
For eyes to see
Intricate nests,



Tiny birds, [bright blue] eggs

Delight of your creation.



Bless to me this bird's nest



CONCLUSION

In daily life: Walking the rounds

Find a holy place to walk around. It might be a...[clockwise] journey around a favorite tree, your church, or around the edges of a labyrinth. While walking the rounds, you might say traditional prayers like the Hail Mary and the Lord's Prayer, but any prayers of the heart are welcome.

In daily life: Three essential things

Reflect on the three things in your own life you count as most essential. Hold them as principles or touchstones for your life right now as you continue your spiritual journey. One way to do this is to imagine you are at the

end of your life looking back. For what do you want to be remembered?

BENEDICTION

Invitation to small group experience through Zoom
Tuesdays, 12 noon and 5 PM (**for an hour**)
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- Tuesdays, 12 noon and 5 PM
(Same mtg, two different times)
- July 14 – August 18
- Book available at Cokesbury, Barnes & Noble, Amazon, etc. (about \$10)
- Need Zoom invitation.
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