



SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

Turning Points

I really do understand that people change... not so much from who we are as to who we are.

- Madeleine L'Engle, *A Severed Wasp*

Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. To keep our faces toward change, and behave like free spirits in the presence of fate, is strength undefeatable.

- Helen Keller

Opening and Chalice Lighting

Transcendental Etude

No one ever told us we had to study our lives,
Make of our lives a study, as if learning natural history or music,
That we should begin with simple exercises first and slowly go on trying the hard ones, Practicing till strength and accuracy become one with the daring to leap into transcendence.

And in fact we can't live like that: we take on everything at once before we've even begun to read or mark time, we're forced to begin in the midst of the hardest movement,

The one already sounding as we are born.

- Adrienne Rich, *Singing the Living Tradition Hymnal* #665

Quiet Reflection

...Saint Francis reminds us that the way out of our loneliness is not to seek the balm of understanding from others but to try to reach across the chasm ourselves. It is in the act of trying to understand others, he reminds us, that the miracle of growth and creation lies.

- Kent Nerburn, *Make Me An Instrument of Your Peace:*

Living in the Spirit of the Prayer of St. Francis

Sharing/ Check-In

Take two or three minutes to share how you are spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, and physically. You can speak or you can pass. We want to know how you are in this moment.

Turning Points

Along the path from the environment that you grew up in, the things you thought you knew, the things that you believed, the things that you have felt – from that place to this place – the things you believe now, the things you know now, the things you believe now, there have been numerous turns, revelations, occasions to have a change of mind, a change of heart, opportunities to see things in a new way.

Break/Quiet Contemplation

When the spirit is fed, we grow larger-hearted, and we want to pass on the gift.

- Edward Espe Brown, *Tomato Blessings and Radish Teachings.*

A person can grow only as much as his horizon allows.

- John Powell

We believe faith should come across us like a blinding light, transforming us, subsuming us in divine rapture. . . But faith is not always so dramatic. It is sometimes a quiet shaping – an edifice built, stone by stone, from the hard labors of our heart.
- *Kent Nerburn, Make Me An Instrument of Your Peace:*
Living in the Spirit of the Prayer of St. Francis

The primary benefit of practicing any art, whether well or badly, is that it enables one's soul to grow.
- *Kurt Vonnegut Jr.*

Sharing/Deep Listening

Speak about this topic in any way that is comfortable to you. If you choose to use the questions, focus on just one or two, as this will allow you to go deeper into the topic.

- Share one of those turning points in your life. What was your frame of reference before the change? What precipitated the change? How were you different afterward?
- What beliefs, ideas and feelings have remained constant for as long as you can remember?

Discussion

This is a time to supportively respond to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared.

Checkout/ Likes & Wishes

What did you like about this meeting? What would you like to see change at future meetings?

Announcements

Closing Reading/ Extinguish Chalice

Mindful of truth ever exceeding our knowledge, and community ever exceeding our practice, reverently we covenant together, beginning with ourselves as we are, to share the strength of integrity and the heritage of the spirit, in the unending quest for wisdom and love.
- *Walter Royal Jones, Jr., Singing the Living Tradition Hymnal #458*