

“Behold, I make all things new.” Rev 21:5

This week, in the funeral service for Queen Elizabeth, this was part of the scripture reading. In fact, it is often used in services of burial. This week I attended a conference of this Episcopal diocese. The theme of this gathering of people from all over this part of Texas was renewal and reconnection. So many gatherings have been cancelled over the last three years, as we all know. Reconnecting was not as easy or spontaneous as I expected. We are still not sure. We are not the same. If we feel comfortable and not so worried for ourselves there is concern and hesitancy about how those we meet feel. Do we hug? Do we keep a distance? If we sniff or sneeze is that scary for those around us? A three year chunk of time is missing from our shared history. Those of us who lived through Harvey needed to keep talking about it. It was a trauma. People who were not so involved and affected it may not have wanted to hear any more about it.

I am not sure we realize how much of a trauma this separation, isolation and fear have been. “Surely all we have to do is go back to normal”. Relationships have changed. The experience of your neighbor as a source of danger is very disturbing. The joy of getting together again has been in a shadow. At the conference, my response to seeing so many who were the ones I see once in a while, was “I haven’t seen you in so long!”. The surprise felt silly. No one has seen anyone in so long.

We need to pay attention to our reactions and those of others. We can reconnect. Perhaps we can learn some things about connection in the process. We can realize how much we need each other. We can realize how much we actually do love each other, whether we are personal friends or just co travelers in this journey. We have learned some new level of sensitivity, perhaps, to what the other needs in reassurance or accommodation. We can be open to those around us and to God’s leading as we continue this process.

Fall is not usually a season of renewal and rebirth. It is usually more a time of gathering in and thanksgiving. There is celebration for things finished. This year,

however, feels to me like renewal, rebirth and beginnings. Perhaps it has something to do with the incredible burst of growth in response to the rains with which we have been blessed. There are some places who have not yet seen the lessening of the drought, and we pray relief comes soon for them. Perhaps the sight of green in the places which have had rain will give hope.

A great reminder of God's promise that He will indeed make all things new.

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