

A Reflection from Rev. Dr. Emlyn Ott.

Mornings slide into each other. It is hard to distinguish one day from another. The usual rhythms, distances, distractions, and comforts are muted as we hear updates about the spread of a global crisis and the directives of “stay at home unless you are essential” echoing.

We take walks to change the pace and greet folks that we have never met before. This is not social distancing—it is clarifying the importance of our relationships amid that six-foot rule.

Two decades ago, Richard Rohr wrote a book entitled *Adam's Return*. It is the study of indigenous cultures' initiation rites for young boys and what it takes to grow oneself up from a self-referential person to a generative, compassionate one. God's intention for that first human.

Rohr's point was that communities develop sacred rituals of transition that invite humans into a bigger view of life. In a bigger view, nature, beauty, suffering, work, sexuality, and relationships have greater meaning than at first glance. As our good friend and former POW Ed Glover would say “it is an honor to work and live every single day.”

It appears that we are engaging in an incredible initiation rite at this moment of “stay at home” attentiveness. All rites of initiation such as baptism, blessing, confirmation, marriage, Eucharist, and funerals demonstrate tension. Loss and renewal.

Darkness and light. Cycles and season, yin, and yang. Finding goodness, as Dorothy Gale in *The Wizard of Oz* said, that “is in your own backyard.” It takes a good bit of challenge and suffering in order to access the the backyard. And what is most important.

In this time of global, societal, and family disruption we have some universal truths that are revealing themselves to us. Some patterns of behavior about being human are out and about for our own observation. Our natural tendency is to be watching others. This is prime time for self-awareness. Our patterns of relationships are disrupted. We are with our nearest and dearest close to 24 hours a day. We fight, we flee, we freeze—perhaps even fabricate. Perhaps we are facing the best of times to let go of who we think we are and live into who we really are. Or want to be.

Challenged to pull things together...with tremendous fear and hope, YOU are rising to the occasion.

May this time of initiation, challenge, and perspective bring with it a renewed compassion and love for all those you have the privilege of connecting with.

With gratitude for you,

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