

Dear Friends

The rules of the children's playground game "Red Light, Green Light" are fairly straightforward. You can 'go' on green and you need to 'stop' on red. Not a bad lesson either for when you leave the playground.

In our community, and indeed in our Province, we have been pretty successful with being told to stop. Almost everything that wasn't required for the essentials of living came to a stop. And for the most part, everyone obeyed the rules. While we were doing so I think we hoped that a day would come when the rules would be 'go'. But it doesn't look like we are getting the green light. Resumption of activity and mobility needs to be done slowly and cautiously. That is going to apply to worship as surely as it applies to restaurants and transit. Even as our Church Council began to think about what worship might look like as restrictions are eased we have found consensus in an understanding that 'go' doesn't mean picking up where we left off. There is a lot of time and prayerful reflection to be done before that part of our life together can resume.

So what do we need within ourselves as we enter into a time of slow resumption, an 'amber' time rather than the 'green' one hoped for? Recently, my thoughts brought me back to the familiar verse sometimes called the Serenity Prayer. It is often understandably associated with 12 step recovery programs but it was written in the 1930's by American Theologian Reinhold Niebuhr for a much broader audience. It goes like this:

*God grant me the **serenity** to accept the things I cannot change,
The **courage** to change the things I can,
And the **wisdom** to know the difference.*

All three of the key words will serve us well. We need *serenity* to accept that there is much about life in the present that we have no power to change. Let us be free from the anger or frustration that can arise when something is utterly out of our hands. We need the *courage* to act with conviction in the easing of restrictions precisely because green won't mean 'go'. None of us want to live with yet another health risk in our lives but whenever and however we return to activity, courage will be a necessary asset. And *wisdom* is the voice within which will help us discern what each of us should do and when we should do it.

Wisdom is the most spiritual of these attributes. In the Old Testament, wisdom is thought of as nothing less than an aspect of God which can be incarnated in humankind. In 1 Kings 3, Solomon dreams that God will grant him whatever gift he asks for, to aid him in assuming the responsibilities of his father David. Solomon asks for "a heart with skill to listen". God is so pleased Solomon wants wisdom above all that the request is granted in such a manner that no one before or after will be as wise.

We are blessed with wisdom all around us from which to draw inspiration. There is wisdom in the community and traditions of faith. There is wisdom in the knowledge of experts. There is wisdom in loved ones with whom we share our lives. But above all, there is wisdom in you. God dwells within each and every one of us and wishes to speak if we will listen. Listen for the wisdom within you. It will tell you when green means 'go'.

Be well, be safe, be hopeful.

Michael