

Daily Devotional, July 15, 2020 Drawing Inside the Lines

“The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With the LORD at my right hand, I will not be shaken.” Psalm 16:6-8 (NIV)

Early on when the shelter-in-place order first came into being, when many people were working from home for the first time, there were a number of articles going around social media and the internet encouraging people to make a daily schedule to help organize their lives. My first thought was, aren't organized workers and professionals doing this already? Busy with the work at hand, not to mention other duties I created to help fill in the gaps of not being able to meet with parishioners and others personally, I rolled my eyes and forged ahead.

Boy, was I mistaken! After a few months into this new way of life, I found myself reassessing how I had been going about things. I found myself asking questions such as: What things in my life are bringing me joy? What practices are drawing me closer to God, and helping me to grow in my faith? And which things are bad habits that I have allowed to creep in that are creating stress, anxiety, and exhaustion?

In the history of the church, there have been many Christians who have set out to establish a way of life with the aim of growing their relationships to God, to others, to all of creation, and to self. One of the most famous rules of life was written by St. Benedict. It summarized how the common life in the monastery should be carried out. While some of the rules of the monastic life could be extremely strict (they prohibited laughing and talking during meals!) they created set boundaries for what was considered to be the good life.

In our modern lives, we have become used to living lives with few boundaries. Now is an opportunity for us to rediscover the boundaries which can help us lead lives which honor God and make good use of the gifts God has given us—gifts of time, talents, and possessions. I like to think of it as something akin to the guard rails on a mountain pass, the ones that remind us to stay away from the edge of the road ahead of us and keep us from toppling over the side.

What boundaries do you need in your life? Are you making time for prayer? Are you connecting with others? If you can't go outside, are you getting the sunlight and exercise you need, and taking care of your health in other ways? Take some time to reflect on these questions. It may be helpful to consider writing your own rule of life, with your family, a partner, or by yourself. By setting these boundaries, and sticking to them, you may be amazed by how God will transform your life!

Blessings on the journey. It appears as if we still have a long way to go.

Prayer: Loving God, I come to You today, living in the safety of Your love. Forgive me for ignoring those boundaries that bring safety and comfort to my life. Give me the desire, the courage, and the strength to follow Your principles each day. Teach me how to discipline myself to live within reasonable boundaries that will keep me on a path of healthy decisions based upon your guidance and your love. Jesus, you are the way, the truth, and the life. I choose to follow you from this day forward. Amen