

Our Lenten Retreat - Week 7

Palm Sunday

This week we consider what “rut” we find ourselves in, and what practices work for us as “rungs” so that we can climb out.

The branches of palms were waved to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem as a sign of victory, and they also represent peace, triumph, and eternal life. For ancient Assyrians, the tree was considered sacred and represented the connection of Heaven, represented by the crown of the tree, and Earth, represented by the trunk.

Let the palm branch be sacred for you this week. Know that it is being waved to welcome you out of the rut and into the triumphant life that awaits when we live free from the bonds of the ego mind, emerged into the experience of Heaven that awaits outside the rut.

Archetypal Energy for the week:

This week we will enter into the archetypal energy of the Spiritual Warrior. Caroline Myss writes, “The concept of the spiritual Warrior has been pioneered by Dan Millman (The Peaceful Warrior), the Tibetan Buddhist teacher Chögyam Trungpa (Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior), Prof. Robert Thurman, and others. They direct us to use the classic Warrior virtues of heroism, stoicism, and self-sacrifice for conquering the ego and gaining control of our inner lives.”

It’s not about battle, you see, it is about using the skills one might hone in battle to do our spiritual work. Heroism, stoicism, and self-sacrifice. Heroism like that Christopher Reeve enacted, stoicism that allows us to not be taken over by the emotions that come up, and self-sacrifice that allows us to see clearly that any self that can be sacrificed is less than our true Self.

Our practice this week:

Find a partner and set a time to get together. Commit out loud to keep confidential your conversation. Take turns sharing and listening.

Share what your rut looks like or what it is that is keeping you in it right now. Be honest. This is a safe place to share, and hearing yourself utter these words opens up opportunity for growth. Draw a palm frond below, and write in each leaflet practices from your life that work for you. Let this serve as a visual reminder to use them, and as a way to talk about them with your partner

When you listen, do so actively. Mirror back what you are hearing the other person say; don't try to "fix" them. You are their sacred witness. Offer encouragement when they share ways that they've made progress, and support when they share times they've slipped.

Consider these words from Rumi as you complete your time together.

*Come, come, whoever you are,
Wanderer, idolater, worshiper of fire,
Come even though you have broken your vows a thousand times,
Come, and come yet again.
Ours is not a caravan of despair.*

Our prayer for the week:

Father Mother God, I open my eyes to see the branch you have laid down for me that I might climb out from the rut I find myself in. This branch of palm, this symbol of victory, is not only the ladder I climb, it is a promise of hope. Bring me the courage and the trust I need to make my way out. Steady my feet as I climb. Thank you for the knowing that I am not alone. Help me connect with others that we might find our way together. And so it is. Amen.