

February 19, 2012
Seventh Sunday In Ordinary Time

*Thus says the Lord,
'Remember not the things of the past,
The things of long ago consider not;
See I am doing something new!
Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?'*
Isaiah 43:18

What a terrific reading to serve us as a doorway to Lent, 2012. Lent is not a time to dredge up the past. It is a new time, a spring time, a time to do something new.

Creation Spirituality now reminds us that the whole epic of creation is ongoing. Creation did not just happen; it is continuing to happen.

And if this is true of the universe, surely it is true for you and me. Brain studies now show us that our brains can achieve newness and growth even in our elder years. To achieve this, being creative is very helpful. Learning new things actually grows brain neurons!

"Remember not the things of the past..."

If we could achieve that in our coming Lent, it would be a quantum leap forward. How often and how many people dwell on past slights, past grudges, past mistakes, past sins. It reminds one of a beautiful automobile, spinning its tires and going nowhere. Instead it stays in place, mired in the mud — stalemated.

"The things of long ago consider not..."

There are people not speaking to each other today because of some slight maybe 20 or 30 or more years ago! How many families have been rent by this foolishness?

Jesus came to us with Good NEWS. The people in the Gospel today were so intent on the Good News of healing reaching the paralytic that they became very creative!

They did not stand around moaning and griping because they could not get in the door. They said, let's be creative! Or maybe: "There is more than one way to skin a cat!" Probably not, but that was their attitude.

I think today's gospel is one of the most colorful and creative of the gospel stories. Just consider: they crawled up on the roof, dragging the sick man with them. Can you imagine the inhabitants of the house when they heard the shuffling and scraping above them? And then dust began to fall into the room, and soon an opening appeared, and eyes peered down from above!

Did Jesus admonish them? Not at all. He must have smiled at their ingenuity. And then he looked at the paralytic and responded: "Child! Your sins are forgiven."

A Lenten question: How can we be creative in our lives in responding to Jesus and to each other?

In the Second Reading today, Paul reminds us that "*God has put his seal upon us and given the Spirit in our hearts.*"

The Spirit is creative. Thus we can be led by the Spirit to be creative. It is the very direction of the Holy Spirit. To be mired in place, to be mesmerized by the past, is to neglect the creative promptings of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Let that blessed Spirit guide you through Lent to something new!

Come Holy Spirit...help us to RENEW the face of the Spirit!

Breakfast Question: What does Lent mean to you?

Personal Reflection: How can I do something new in Lent 2012?