

# OF PRESENT MOMENTS

## BISHOP' S COMMENTS ON PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS



### IN AWE AND HORROR

What a spectacle of extremes, all in one week. We stood in awe on Monday of the almost mystical experience of a complete solar eclipse, only then to be presented four days later with the horrific onslaught of Hurricane Harvey. Were it not for the extreme damage and death caused by that gargantuan storm making land fall, we might rightly stand in awe of that spectacle of nature as well.

Our hearts and prayers go out to the tens of thousands of people affected by this cataclysmic event. And I hope our action toward aiding those affected will go out as well, but more to that point further down. I want to write in relation to another related response I have to this kind of event first.

I am awed by how some people, especially when they affirm to be writing from a Christian perspective, assert that this act of nature is actually an occurrence of Divine judgment on people living within the arena of the storm's devastation. More accurately, I am disgusted and appalled. Such a pronouncement is, I believe, horrible theology, and such an affront to thoughtful, compassionate, faithful Christianity. Such pronouncements are a rabid justification of one's own prejudices, I believe, and not at all a legitimate statement of God's intent.



I refuse to accept that God inflicts such devastation on humankind as an act of righteous anger and condemnation. That does not square with the nature and passion of God which Jesus, especially, invites us to know.

Where, then, is God in this kind of event? I find some insight to that query in a portion of the story of the prophet Elijah:

(Continued from last page)

I Kings 19: "Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave." I Kings 19: 11b-13a

One way I understand this passage, in the context of the situation along the Gulf, is that we find God in what follows the fury. God becomes present to us when the flash and flood move on. God is there to be present, to be compassionate and peaceful. Such is a word of comfort and care.

As such, it is also where we need to be as followers of the Holy One, lending our action to our prayers.

One way to help: our own Episcopal Relief and Development is actively engaged. You can go immediately to their website and donate:

<http://www.episcopalrelief.org/hurricane-harvey-response>

It rains on the just and the unjust.  
Matt 5:45

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SUNRIVER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP OFFERS A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY



It is a delight to announce that on Oct. 7, 2017 noted author, lecturer and teacher Barbara Brown Taylor will be at Sunriver Christian Fellowship in Sunriver. Beginning at noon Barbara will present followed by a Q&A session and a book signing session until 3:30 PM. Limited tickets for the event are available at \$35 per person. Please make your checks out to SCF and mail them to Bob Vogel, PMB 150, 18160 Cottonwood Rd., Sunriver, OR 97707. Please note Barbara Brown Taylor on the check's memo line. The tickets will be mailed to you once your check is received.

SCF is located in the Holy Trinity Catholic Church, 18143 Cottonwood Rd. in Sunriver. Tickets are available on a first come, first served basis and standing room will not be available. If you have questions you can call Bob at 541 598 0599.

A limited number of Barbara Brown Taylor's books will be available for sale at this event. Payment may be made by check to SCF.

## OF PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS

- In our prayers, let us remember those within our own Diocese who are contending with the threats and consequences of wildfires; especially, those in and around Sisters.
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- It is a joy to welcome back into the Diocese Beth and The Rev. Canon Bill Ellis, newly retired Dean of St. John's Cathedral in Spokane. They have returned to Bend where they served Trinity and our Diocese with such grace and distinction for many years. I must admit I have left them alone in their well earned transition to retirement, but fair warning: only for a season! Welcome home, Beth and Bill.
  - Just a final reminder: the Ordination to the Priesthood of our own Marilyn Roth takes place Saturday, September 9th, 1:00 p.m. at St. Paul's, The Dalles. Everyone is welcome to attend, and invited especially to prayer. I suspect Marilyn is excited, and I must confess to my own sense of awe and excitement as this will be my first ordination. (Should I mention I harbor a bit of nervousness as well?) I am especially anticipating greatly what Marilyn's transition to priesthood portends, for we are calling her into a role within the Diocese which is not a specific call to a church assignment, but more a call as proclaimer of the Gospel in a wider setting of community. Her ministry will, I pray, lead us into new dimensions of being the followers of Jesus in The Way.
  - We are in for a rich gift at next month's Convention with the presence of Dr. Arthur Sutherland. Our exchanges with him in preparation for his presentations as keynote speaker have been marked by a keen wit, servant mentality, and thoughtful integrity. I believe he is going to be perfect for us, and that we have found a great new friend for our Diocese.
  - Finally, a teaser; but first, a note of appreciation. We are deeply grateful for the presence of The Rev. Armand Larive, Ph.D. at our recent Adult Ed. I have heard nothing but raving reviews. And we also thank him for the gift of new signage for our Diocesan office and our two newest buildings. I believe you will get to see photos of those in an upcoming edition of Connections. Thank you, "Bunky"! And now the teaser: get this in your calendar - next year's adult Ed. weekend will be August 16-19, with Dr. Wendy Farley as our presenter. She is going to be such a treat. I have read several of her books, and she has so much to teach us. You will not want to miss this opportunity. Oh, and it will be during Cherry Festival in Cove - all the more reason to join with us.



I am delighted to be involved with our Cursillo Community in Eastern Oregon in the effort to renew and share this ministry of discipleship. There will be a gathering in The Dalles on Friday evening and Saturday, September 29-30th, at St. Paul's Church. While this event, called in the vernacular of Cursillo a Grand Ultreya, is normally attended by those who have made their weekend Cursillo event, we are opening up attendance for anyone who is interested. We invite you to join us for the entire

gathering or even for parts of it, especially if you wonder what Cursillo is all about and want to seek further information about who and what this Christian community effort is within the larger ministry of our Diocese.

You can find more information at our Diocesan website, [www.episdioeo.org](http://www.episdioeo.org); click on the "What We Do" banner. The registration for for this event will be listed under the Cursillo heading.

INTRODUCING THE IONA INITIATIVE



While we continue to offer formation for ministry tried and true Mutual Ministry models where that most appropriate, we are most excited to move our Diocese into participation with an internet based model of formation being effectively utilized by many other Dioceses. As their website explains:

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"The Iona Initiative is a collaborative project of a growing number of Episcopal dioceses in conjunction with the Seminary of the Southwest and the Iona School for Ministry of the Diocese of Texas.

The initiative provides a high-quality theological education for the formation of priests and deacons in the local diocesan setting. It's aim is to educate a new generation of talented clergy leaders."

We are intending to explore how this program could be used in training for lay ministry as well, a direction we understand the Iona Initiative is considering.

The Commission on Ministry will make a presentation on this opportunity at our fall Convention in Bend.