

Proper 6, Yr. A: Mom's Purse

Matt. 9:35-10:15; Romans 5:6-11; Exodus 19:2-8a, Romans 5:1-8, Matthew 9:35-10:23
The Rev. Paul D. Allick, The Church of the Advent, June 14, 2020

Throughout our family and small town, my mom was famous for her purse. Mom's purse was huge. It was actually a small 'carry on' piece of luggage. Whatever you needed it was a good bet that Mom would have it in her bag.

One of the girls needs a bobby pin, got it. Mom, do you have any gum? Which flavor? Here, I've got a notepad and pen in my purse. Neighbors looking for an aspirin while shopping would ask mom for one.

I picked up my packing habits from her. I would pack three weeks of stuff for a five-day trip.

Then one autumn about 15 years ago that changed. I was going to visit my dad for four days. I decided against all my judgment to pack light, to get over that maternal voice in my head that kept saying, "You might need that."

And sure enough, what happened? My dear dad had a massive stroke while I was visiting. I ended up staying for two weeks on four days of clothes and personal supplies!

Are moms always right?

I survived. I made due and I learned a life lesson about the difference between what I want and what I need.

In today's Gospel after Jesus identifies the twelve apostles, he immediately sends them out to take their part in the mission: to proclaim the good news that the Kingdom has come, to heal the sick and to cast out evil. This is not Jesus' mission alone. It belongs to them all. The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few.

And then he gives these instructions:
For now, focus only on the lost among us right here in Israel.

If a community does not listen to you, shake the dust off your shoes and move on.

Take nothing with you, pack lightly: no money, no extra clothes or shoes, no bag (purse), no staff.

How would my mom ever survive without her purse? How would any of us survive without all that baggage?

We would. We have. We will.

Jesus is telling us, as you go on the mission I've given you don't over pack. Keep it simple. Less is more. Whatever you hold onto holds onto you.

When we are loaded down with possessions, whether physical, spiritual or emotional, we are loaded down with cares and anxiety. This is no way to enter the mission field. In order to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ, to work for healing and to cast away evil, we need to be traveling and living light.

I've certainly been very aware of this during this Shelter in Place. I've unloaded a lot of material and religious baggage that I thought was so essential.

It happened when I decided to choose my response to the realities around me. I am in charge of my spiritual and emotional well-being. I am in charge of the way I choose to see the world.

In this current difficult situation, I chose, as I have so often before, to take the only path that leads to peace and eternal life. I chose Jesus Christ.

Now more than ever, we need to live in our lives what we profess with our lips.

In this time of great uncertainty, if we choose, we can come to a fuller understanding of the impact of Christ in our lives.

As we heard from Romans, “we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”

Our mission has not changed, only the circumstances. Our relationship with God in Christ has not changed. It is being tested to the utmost.

In this time of trial, all we have is Jesus. Will that be enough? Or do we need to bring along more baggage?