

Ready? Ready or not, God calls.

Set? Believe it or not, we have more than we need.

Go! Where? When? How?

Reflection Question:

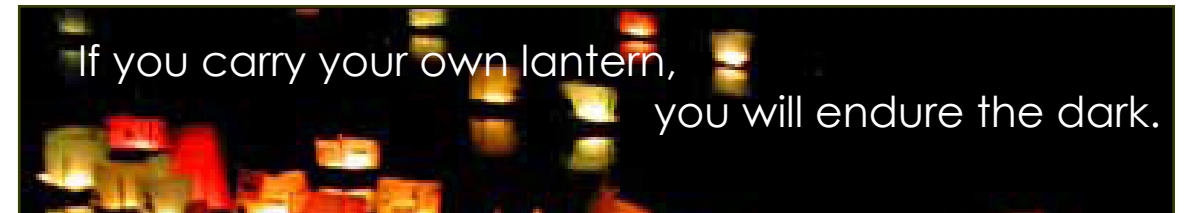
“What are the significant questions we need to ask ourselves, personally and communally, that will lead us to action -- to be radical followers of Jesus Christ?”

Summary:

- * These are significant questions that hold the answers we need in order to be prophetic.
- * These are the significant questions that will lead us to go deeper into the answer.
- * These are the significant questions that hold an understanding of that which weighs us down and causes us to be reluctant to embrace a radical following of Jesus.

The questions that are contained in the blessing basket will be compiled into a reflection booklet and sent to you for reflection and conversations personally and communally.

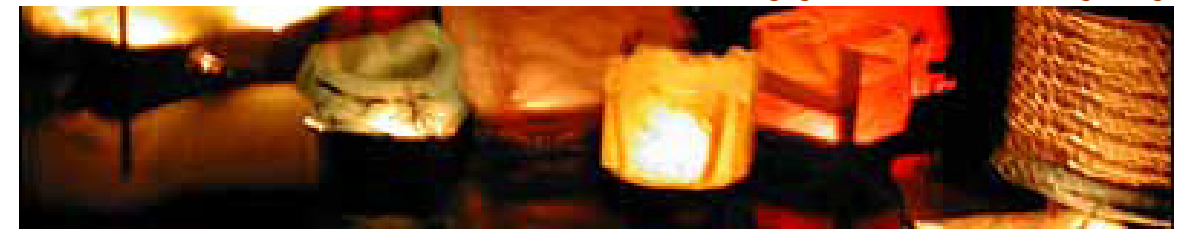
Today's experience can be adapted into conversation, presentation, process, and reflection day formats. These formats are available to local communities, EFCs, ministry groups, friends, women, etc. To schedule, please **contact Jean Greenwald at 314.633.7016.**



It is time to see if the light of hope and courage,
of commitment and risk still shines in religious



If those lanterns are not dimmed we shall surely get where we are going.



Prophetic in Mission: Ready? Set? Go!

August 9, 2008

Purpose: To identify the questions that will reveal the answers of who we need to be and what we need to do to be prophetic in mission.

Exploring What It Means To Be Prophetic

Reading: Joan Chittister's words --
"An Amazing Journey: A Road of Twists and Turns"
Prophetic Action

Religious life is at the brink of renewal and faced with two choices: personal comfort or prophetic presence, individual commitments or charismatic congregations. Neither choice is an easy one but one does not preclude the other.

If the basic commitment of individual religious and their congregations, after years of adaptation and adjustment and individual development, is to comfort, to security, to private spirituality alone, to the preservation of monastic museums or past apostolic institutions, then there is no reason for that kind of religious life to exist. But something else will surely rise up in their places because God never fails to "comfort the people," to send the prophet, to raise up a voice in the wilderness. What is yet to be certain is whether we will be the ones who decide to do it.

The question now is not whether we have a few prophetic people in every community...

The question now is whether we have prophetic communities who together are a sign of hope, where neither age nor numbers inhibit their call or suppress their voices, where quietism and despair do not blur the alternative models they must give, in every age, to a world at a loss for alternatives.

The question now is whether there is enough down-deep, bedrock, authentic gospel spirituality in us to go on past our personal prayers to the building up of the reign of God to which those prayers call us.

The church is waiting, the world is waiting, the people of the world are waiting to see if there is such a thing as a religious life so immersed in the contemplative moment that it does significant things in significant ways at this significant moment in history.

They are all waiting, waiting to see whether this generation of religious has anything at all to bring to this age as they did to the questions of the past, to see whether this

generation of religious is still really religious. If we will, surely religious congregations now have the opportunity to be more religious than ever before in our time...religious now have the commitment, the spirituality, the social vision and the prophetic presence to take religious life into the future.

Elton Trueblood wrote: "Faith is not belief without proof; faith is trust without reservation." It is time for religious to trust again that we are here now for more than preserving the past, for more than surrendering to old age and dying gracefully, for more than the gathering of retirement funds. We are here to move on with Abram, to begin again with Sarai, to spill the widow's oil. Indeed, the future that God has never abandoned is waiting with confidence and hope that the religious congregations who met the challenges of the past are up to the challenges of the present: theologically, psychologically and spiritually.

"If you carry your own lantern," the Hasidim teach, "you will endure the dark." It is time to see if the light of hope and courage, of commitment and risk still shines in religious life. If those lanterns are not dimmed we shall surely get where we are going.

Chittister OSB, Joan. Religious Life: The Challenge For Tomorrow; 1994.

Personal Reflection:

Mindful of Joan's words and what we know about prophets consider question #1 and one of the two remaining questions:

1. *What would a prophetic congregation look like at this time in history?*
2. *What might it mean to be a prophet today?*
3. *How/when have I experienced prophetic action in my life and/or within the congregation?*