

An outreach of the Rockwood Community Church of Rockwood, Maine
Week of September 28, 2003

The Log Chapel

"The Heart within the Heart of the Moosehead Lake Region"

"Celebrations of Life and Ministry" #15

Special Thought:

"If we are spiritual beings on a human path rather than human beings who may be on a spiritual path," Jungian analyst Jean Shinoda Bolen suggests, "then life is not only a journey but a pilgrimage or quest as well." It is a quest for meaning, fulfillment, and wholeness.

This image of journey, quest, or pilgrimage is a theme in all the wisdom traditions. When a monk asks, "What is the Tao?" Master Unmon replies, "Walk on." It's important to keep moving. Or as Confucius says, "It does not matter how slowly you go, so long as you do not stop."

In the Bible, journey plays a central role in the Old and New Testaments. The Jews wandered in the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land. Jesus of Nazareth took the long, hard road to Jerusalem. And Saul was converted - transformed - to Paul on the road.

Throughout history, people looking for spiritual renewal have undertaken pilgrimages to sacred sites. Once in a life-time Muslims are under obligation to journey to Mecca. They set out with high hopes for the quickening of their faith.

For many of us the inward quest is equally important. Trappist monk Thomas Merton writes: "Our real journey in life is interior; it is a matter of growth, deepening, and of an ever greater surrender to the creative action of love and grace in our hearts."

As the Indian philosopher Sri Aurobindo reminds us, "The spiritual journey is one of continuously falling on your face, getting up, brushing yourself off, looking sheepishly at God and taking another step."

The word "question" is derived from the Latin *quaerere* (to seek) which has the same root as the word "quest." This makes sense. Questions are powerful allies on a spiritual journey. They stretch our mind, body, and soul.

We are more alive when actively involved with questing and questions. Keep moving. Keep crossing inner and outer borders. Keep asking.

From *Spiritual Literacy* by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat

Prayer:

Dear God, Creator of us all,
You have called us through Your Son to follow you
And You will make us into something more
than we ever thought possible before!
We are on the road to that transformation of life!
Surprise us along the way with the lessons of love.
Focus us on the faith of our fathers and mothers.
Fill us with the energies of Your Spirit
that we may not tire or turn from the path of
becoming the people You want us to be.

In Jesus Name we pray, Amen.

Scripture Reading:

"And passing along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately they left their nets and followed him."

Mark 1: 16-18.

"Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek? And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher) "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." John 1:38-39.

"Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me." John 5-6.

Reflection:

The question: "Where have you been since we last talked? The reply: "I have been on the road going here and there?" How often have you and I been in that conversation? It seems like a long time since last spring when we last shared through this medium called "Celebrations of Life and Ministry."

All summer long, I like you have been on the road, continuing the quest, seeking the truth, pursuing the pilgrimage. I have experienced what the poet meant when he wrote, "I learn by going where I have to go!"

All during these recent months, as I have been to the wedding altar with couples, the open grave with families, the hospital rooms with individuals, the classroom

with eager students and have been alone on the lake and the mountain road, one learning has been reinforced for me; I have not been alone, He walks with me and urges me and you to continue the quest, to deepen the search and to pursue the pilgrimage!

Living where we live on a lake with the beautiful mountains stretching for miles in every direction, I have become haunted by the words of Rudyard Kipling:

"There's no sense in going further - it's the edge of cultivation So they said, and I believed it - broke my land and sowed my crops. Built my barns and strung my fences in the little border station, Tucked away below the foothills where the trails run out. Till a voice, as bad as Conscience, rang interminable changes On one everlasting Whisper day and night repeated - so: 'Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges. Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!'

God keeps challenging us to continue the odyssey of life. To stay on task, not be afraid to ask; to seek; to discover; to learn, love and live life to the fullest!

That's where I've been since we were last together. That's where I will be tonight and tomorrow, and the day after that, for as the Psalmist wrote a long time ago: "As the deer longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for Thee, O God."

Thus the longing and the quest continues . . . let us seek together!

Dr. Robert L. Veon