



Grain

“Both knowledge and wisdom are good, but wisdom is much better. It demands the maturity of discernment, which is what it takes to develop a truly consistent ethic of life.” –Richard Rohr, OFM

Field

11 Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. ² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, ³ saying, “Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?” ⁴ Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, ⁵ “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. ⁶ As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. ⁷ I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter; kill and eat.’ ⁸ But I replied, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ ⁹ But a second time the voice answered from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, you must not call profane.’ ¹⁰ This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven... ¹² The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us... Acts 11:1-10 & 12

Thoughts

Who knows all the answers when we are in the middle of a confusing dilemma or embarking on uncharted territory? Discernment is sometimes clearer in retrospect, but carefully reviewing what happened in the recent or distant past can also inform our present.

The apostles and believers gasped at the news that Peter ate with uncircumcised men, but that was how the Spirit led him. Some had to wonder if he was showing disrespect to God. Or, was the Spirit actually moving? To answer, Peter’s encounters and influences are reviewed in chapters 10 and 11.

How many times have we asked God about how the Spirit is working when making a decision in our personal lives or about a social issue? Sometimes we may forget to ask. There are books and trainings that help us understand more about spiritual discernment within Protestant and Catholic traditions. We know that the power of grace is involved in our search. I recall how each of our ELCA Social Statements emerged out of several years of prayer, dialogue, and study. The quality of the social statements is a testimony to the discernment process out of which they emerged.

Right now, our country is absorbing the leaked news about the intention of the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn decisions on past federal abortion cases. ELCA members are not completely united on this issue. But we know that women experiencing poverty and trauma would be most profoundly impacted by reversing Roe versus Wade. In your discussions we invite you to use ELCA resources.

In whatever matter we discern, with or without all the perfect answers, it is important to ask the question: How is the Spirit moving in my life and community? Happy Monday!

Share

Send any quotes you'd like to share with our network to cindyc@loppw.org

All Monday Quotes found under the Resources & Advocacy Tools tab at www.loppw.org

Many blessings upon you,
Pastor Cindy

Find all social statements [HERE](#). Also, Dr. Mary J. Streufert, Director for Justice for Women of the ELCA, wrote this [Abortion summary 2019](#)