

Mustard Seeds and Mountains: Lenten Questions for the Days at Hand

Dear Companions and Colleagues,

As Lent beckons, may this spontaneous offering provide another opportunity for rich reflection.

I am a daughter of a scientist and a mathematician. However, science and math are neither my first nor my favorite languages. Yet, these two disciplines offer **robust metaphors** for the mysterious and majestic movements of God.

It's worth noting that Jesus often talked in metaphor, asking us to pay attention to the **small things** of nature. "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed," he said. (*see Matthew 13:31) In Jesus' time, the ordinary mustard plant was considered both medicinally healing as well as naturally wild. Wherever it grew, it multiplied, its roots burrowing deep in the changing terrain. Jesus' words remind us that, no matter how seemingly isolated or unremarkable, there is no place beyond the kingdom's life-giving touch; no one beyond the kingdom's reach for wholeness and healing.

In 2020, we have learned how easily **small things** - - a microscopic molecule, a virus, or a re-purposed RNA code - - can change our outer and inner worlds in momentous ways.

- How might the current pandemic and Jesus' metaphor shape your Lent this year?
- What new, small thing, has been created within you - or your congregation - during this pandemic season?
- What seeds do you sense God planting?

In geology, we learn of those places where the earth's tectonic plates **shifted**, carving out continents. Outer crust and inner core - - ice and fire - - danced next to each other, forever changing the topography of the earth. Mountains and valleys erupted; rivers and lakes emerged.

- How might this metaphor of **large shifts** shape your Lent this year?
(There's a lot to be gleaned when we explore the geological strata of our souls!)
- What happens when we drill through our daily crust of polite conversations and endless expectations to the truest part of ourselves?
- What do we find hidden below the well-defended walls or the frozen memories layered within?
- What might we find if we continue to drill down and go deep, following the relentless pull of the Holy One?
- What heat and fire might we rediscover at our core?
- How might we use these discoveries to warm up the world?

Whatever captures our imagination during this Lent,
may these 40 days draw us ever closer to Jesus,
and the endless mysteries and astounding miracles found by his side.

Peace,
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