

## Palm Sunday: Celebration of Ministry

It's Palm Sunday and I suspect it doesn't feel like it. There is no brunch being set up downstairs. Hymns we like to sing are not going to happen. The only way to wave a palm branch is to have one at home. Still, what is it we want to celebrate on Palm Sunday? Is there a reason not to do that just because some of the familiar trappings might be missing?

In Keep A True Lent, Charles Fillmore says this about Palm Sunday: "The hosannas of the rejoicing multitude and the spreading of their garments and branches of trees before Jesus, represent joyful obedience and homage that all the thoughts in one's consciousness give when an error state of mind is overcome. 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' "

As I reflected on the ministry of Jesus, I found three elements that were a part of lifting one's consciousness to overcome error states of mind: Healing, Education and Miracles. I'm usually not that big on acronyms but I couldn't help but notice that spelled HEM. As in the woman was healed by touching the hem of his garment. What did his HEM look like as it unfolded and what does it look like in the ministry of Unity of Lehigh Valley?

We started with "There's A Healing Going On" because frankly, that seems to be the most frequent request to Silent Unity and in the midst of a pandemic, an idea on everyone's mind. In the Revealing Word, Fillmore says this about healing: "When the mind is free from error thoughts, harmony in the body ensues." Fillmore also says, "Health is from within and does not have to be manufactured in the without. It is the very essence of Being, universal and enduring." The very idea that there is a wholeness within, that divine spark within us, is pretty radical. Jesus repeatedly told those impacted by healing that it was from within themselves, "Your faith has made you well." Healing is a consciousness of wholeness and from that awareness we bring a return to wholeness into our body, our emotions, our relationships, our finances, and our peace of mind.

Health, wholeness and well being are states of consciousness that make themselves manifest in a unique way for each of us. Does healing happen at ULV?

We might immediately have an image of an evangelical service with someone laying hands on individuals while others shout and some fall prostrate on the ground. While I am not denying any opportunity for healing, it doesn't usually look like that at ULV. Rather I think it looks like an awakening to the truth that we possess wholeness and that divine LIFE is a power we can access and claim. It is the healing of taking control of our decisions and believing we are worthy of wholeness in body, in relationships, in finance and in our minds. Healing in recognizing that addictions are running our lives and we can make a different choice, day by day and that we are NOT alone in our decision making. People heal by releasing dis-ease and by accepting wholeness. Yes, I believe that happens in our community and I am grateful we are a place where these teachings are made available.

Which brings me to education and empowerment. Most of the education Jesus engaged in was directed towards encouraging people to claim the personal power of divinity he was revealing to them and use it for their own lives. He taught in a number of ways, not the least of which was by example—by walking the talk of his own teachings. He taught by parables, or stories that illustrate a spiritual principle. He taught by precepts or directives or simple one liners: Judge not lest you be judged; Reap what you sow; Love one another. All of the teachings designed to help people understand their divinity, their kinship with the Divine Creator and with one another, their magnificent power and beauty and gifts. Teachings that allow us to replace the error thoughts of limitation with new beliefs in unlimited possibilities. And he taught the very temporary nature of our existence here on earth and the foolishness of our attachments to how things should be and to our stuff.

Does ULV educate? Well, you will have to tell me.

What have you learned through the sermons, workshops, classes, and events associated with Unity of Lehigh Valley? I no longer say, "Here at ULV" because in this moment we are everywhere!

What a glorious lesson from this time apart! We are everywhere!

We connect through cyber connections. Our relationship laboratory has expanded and there are no walls to contain it. We continue to learn and grow together. No one sits in anyone else's seat because we are all in our own places. It seems some pretty spectacular empowerment is still unfolding in this unique void. Once seeds have been planted, education continues without a lecture or any new prompting. We know metaphysical interpretation means going beyond the literal meaning. We know life is full of lessons so we just go about our days looking for them. How many seeds have been thrown into the soil of your mind from songs and stories and sermons you've been exposed to through Unity of Lehigh Valley? This is how Unity ministry continues the tradition of education and empowerment.

And what about miracles? Webster says miracles are events that deviate from the known laws of nature. Fillmore points out that "In reality miracles are events that take place as a result of the operation of a higher, unknown law." Or for me, sometimes events that operate according to a law beyond my understanding.

The miracles of Jesus are what distinguish him in the minds of some as truly divine. Raising the dead into life, walking on water, multiplying the loaves and fishes and turning water into wine. It is interesting to note that the Old Testament has certain prophets who performed miracles of healing and abundance, especially Elijah and Elisha. So what do the miracles represent as a part of Jesus ministry? To me, they represent possibilities beyond our current level of belief and sometimes even imagination. Could the pandemic in the United States end in April? Because I do believe in miracles, I would say yes. Do I have any idea how that would happen? No. Do I think we should ignore science and think a miracle will save us? No.

But I think the idea of miracles is to stay open to possibilities and claim the potential we overlook when we get mired in our humanity and duality.

So do miracles happen at ULV? Well, I've been here 11 years and no one has walked on water. I know of one person who has talked about a near death experience and lived to tell about it. We **do** have some interesting loaves and fishes stories.

The first was years ago when I suggested we have 3 months cash reserves for operating expenses. The board looked at me a little skeptically and asked, "And what action steps do you have for that goal? We currently aren't even breaking even, much less setting anything aside." I said, "Let's set the intention for now and see how it goes." A little over a year later we were beginning to break-even in operating income and we had an inheritance that funded our cash reserves. That is the operation of the law of mind action, principles of abundance and still beyond the initial expectations of possibilities.

A few years ago, I had been talking about renovating the sanctuary. I had colors picked out in discussions with the board. I suspect if I had said out loud that we could rip out all the carpet, update the downstairs lighting and repaint the sanctuary and have it all paid for, most of you would have said, "When pigs fly." Even knowing my fondness for flying pigs, we are suspicious of miracles. And is the broken pipe and the insurance money a miracle? Like much of life, I suppose it is how you look at it and the consciousness you bring to the examination. Miracles give us examples that reinforce the idea that with God, all things are possible. Miracles encourage us to dream, to imagine and to anticipate good that we can't see in the moment. Whether or not we see miracles happening at ULV, again depends upon your perspective and the consciousness you bring to the examination. Maybe you only see odd coincidences. Maybe you see the synchronicity of the Universe responding to the demands of our desires. It is up to you!

Jesus did his ministry alone. He had disciples but his ministry was his own. At Unity of Lehigh Valley, we do ministry together. We learn and grow, create and discern together. I would say that Jesus was both humble and divine; a self-aware and selfless servant to his ministry. Maybe that is what we can each one aspire to.

The affirmation Fillmore give in Keep A True Lent for Palm Sunday was: "The spirit of One that raised up Jesus dwells in me, and I am made perfect." On this Palm Sunday we celebrate the ministry of the I AM. The I AM that I am is whole and holy. This is the truth I know and the truth that expands in my understanding day by day.