



Lent reflection for Thursday, March 30th

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John 11:28-37

When Martha had said that Jesus was the Messiah, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Today's reflection is by Erin McNaughton

Reading this passage, I am caught in a kaleidoscope of perspectives and emotions. I'm moved by Martha's revelation; her guru is the Messiah who has been spoken about since before the time of Isaiah. Mary, awash in grief for her brother, says 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' Is that an accusation? The moans of a broken heart? Would he have been saved by a miracle or the love of a friend? The community supporting Martha and Mary in their grief is a chorus observing how Jesus loved his friend and critiquing his late arrival. And Jesus, disturbed in spirit, grieving his loss, and being judged for what he had done and what he had not done.

This idea of Jesus being disturbed really struck me. Because I tend to think of him as this super chill guy sprinkling love and enlightenment in his path. But he's all human and all God. He was probably tired and dusty from walking and heartbroken that he wasn't by his friend's side to comfort and offer strength. And there had to be a bit of looking at his future which was quickly approaching.

I am often disturbed in life. Being back in the office, I am disturbed by having to dress the part again and play the corporate role. I can not understand the push to “get back to normal” while the crises just keep coming. The hard times people are struggling through and the harshness of our political leaders. I worry a lot.

And in this passage, sure Jesus is disturbed in spirit AND he is present. I get disturbed and the whirlwind in my mind and emotions has me lashing out all over. Jesus, gets present with Mary. He cries with her. He goes to the tomb with her. He witnesses this heartbreaking loss with her.

I breathe - deeply. I say a little prayer “God save me from my reaction”, “God please give me the words”, “Lord help me to listen for you”... And I have to know that I don’t know what is next, and that is probably a great blessing as I bumble through this life. Then I take “the next right step” and follow that with another - I find myself present, I connect to those around me, I can see the God in me and the God in you.

Erin McNaughton lives a few blocks from the church and started coming in 2018 and regularly in 2019. She’s found a reconciliation with her childhood faith through this community. She spends a lot of time with her dog Bella in the park and is excited for gardening season.

