

Reflection on Reopening
May 30, 2020
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“But Now, Not Yet”

It's a phrase one learns early in seminary. "***But now, not yet.***" It's a sort of Pauline theological attempt to describe what it's like to experience the circumstances in which we all live--begun but ***not yet*** complete. ***But now*** we shape and enjoy our lives according to the promises of God in Christ while at the same time, those promises have ***not yet*** been fully realized. We live in-between. We go about our business in a world that doesn't live up to the hopes we have for a better world, a world resembling the Kingdom of God--"where crying and pain are no more, but life everlasting." We hope for a *present future*. God's kingdom is inaugurated in Christ, but ***not yet*** consummated. Note even the verb tense-- "*is inaugurated*" --as if it is already happening ***but not*** fully. In the kingdom of God there is no sickness or injustice but life everlasting. ***But now, not yet.*** It's hard to live in-between. With one foot in God's world and one foot here and now, on some days the split stretches us to the breaking point. It's hard to live in-between.

This has been a hard hard week. We have witnessed the 100,000 mark of corona virus deaths. This loss of life and its effect on families and friends and co-workers is almost unspeakable. It's real and it hurts. Unemployment is at an all-time high. It's real and it hurts. And once again we have witnessed the horrific scene of a man being pinned down until he couldn't breathe because of the ugly realities of racial injustice that surround us everyday. It's real and it hurts. It has been a hard hard week. In faith, we live with the hope and promise of better days--*but now, not yet.*

Tomorrow we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost--a time when the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, was gifted to the people of God. The Advocate. We need this advocate now as much as ever before to bring about healing and justice. Though we will not gather-in-one-place-at-one-time, because we care enough for one another to wait... I encourage you to come to the church grounds this week, when you are able. We have been blessed with a sacred and healing place--a piece of heaven-on-earth. Look and listen and feel the presence of God in Christ in and through the Holy Spirit. Let the Holy Spirit speak to you and guide you into a renewed trust and commitment. Let the Holy Spirit inform and shape and use your life *now*. We offer ourselves as instruments of God, praying that the *not-yet* will come in God's time. "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness...and all these things shall be given unto you, Alleluia!*"