

Week 10/13/2011

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The Sabbath at my paternal grandmother's home was special. The entire week seemed but a counting down of days leading up to the crowning achievement of that Friday night's arrival. As the air crackled with the tension of frenetic preparation, the intoxicating smells of roast chicken and freshly made applesauce filled the cramped apartment. My grandmother moved quickly in the kitchen and muttered aloud at the impossibility that all would be finished. Minutes then hours ticked away before the sun went down over the bay at the Jersey shore and whatever wasn't completed was left in its place. The candles were lit; the flame illuminated the dining room with a soft glow as the time of Sabbath rode in on a wave of immense love and made its connecting embrace on our lives.

My ordination last Sunday reminded me of the joy that my grandmother took in the Sabbath; a delight that is often missing today in our homes and churches. The Sabbath has always been both a time to rest from the tasks of work as well as a time to rest from a persistent appetite of consumerism with its tempting morsels of acquisition and pursuit of material things. It gives us time to reconnect with the One to whom we truly belong and bear witness in our response to God and neighbor. In the community formed by Sabbath rest, the healing presence of the risen Christ comes in love to change our reality and set us free.

As followers of the living, loving God, we are honoring the Sabbath and its focus on the needs of our neighbor when we choose to participate-- whatever the day -- in God's ongoing work for justice and transformation. We demonstrate the intent and mercy inherent in the Sabbath when we act to remove the weight of oppression of any kind, to give food to the hungry, to open our hearts and homes to one another, to refrain from harmful gossip and live out the good news of the gospel we hear proclaimed.

The presence of God abides with us as we work towards justice with peace so that destruction, exploitation, loss or oppression will never be the last word. Restoration and abundance, life in all its fullness, will be the word of promise spoken and heard in the world and in the lives of those who delight in the God who gives us the gift of the Sabbath.

Blessings and peace to you all this Sabbath.

Jacqui