

## Reflections on Faith and Life

This morning my devotions included a selection from Carlo Carretto's *Why, O Lord?* He asks questions of his followers:

- "I died on the cross for you and you don't move a finger for me. What is stopping you?"
- "I'm faithful, I've never betrayed you. And you? Betray me is all you do."
- "I love poverty. What about you? What do you love?"
- "I let myself be humiliated, ridiculed, defeated. Why are you afraid of what others will think of you?"

Carretto is writing about learning to live in closer companionship with our living Lord. The sentence that really grabbed me is this: "The journey is long and its name is exodus."

The book of Exodus, the second book in the Christian Bible, tells the story of Moses. At the command of our God, Moses freed the Israelites from slavery in Pharaoh's brickyards. This was the defining moment for God's chosen people: God loved and cared for them; God delivered them from bondage; and God expected to be thanked and praised, forever and ever, amen.

In Carretto's sentence above, it's not the *people* who are making the exodus. Rather, it's our thoughts, words, and deeds; relationships and values; priorities and disciplines that need to undergo an "exodus." As God leads me, draws me nearer to God's self, I find that my laziness, self-centeredness, values, and arrogance are gradually giving way to a more ready awareness of my orientation to my Lord. It's a gradual sort of *exorcism* of the old Gail, giving way to God's "new and improved" Gail. – Food for thought, maybe?

This week our Northwest Synod of Wisconsin is having its annual Synod Assembly via Zoom. The theme is *Justice and Joy*, based on Proverbs 21:15a: *When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous*. Areas of focus include racial justice; hunger ministry; gender equity; LGBTQIA education; and creation care. These issues have been under study by groups in the ELCA for two years. There was no synod assembly last year because of the coronavirus, so we have the most current information available for our reflections. Besides me, each congregation has one delegate (Shirley Rosien, Keith Paul), and we'll be offering discussion groups on these topics.

May you feel God's grace in your life this week(end)!