



Third Class Series for Laity with Bishop Taylor: *Wrestling with God* by Ronald Rolheiser

In Eugene Peterson's translation of The New Testament, when Jesus sends out the disciples, he tells them, "You don't need a lot of equipment. You are the equipment" (Matthew 10:10). After so many months of living with COVID 19, we are well aware of all that we have had to put away or missed or simply lost. We are also aware of the challenge before us as the restrictions are lifted. Yet, this is the one life we have to live, and we are called to live it for God. Like the disciples, Jesus sends us out to proclaim the Good News, and often we have to accept that regardless of what equipment we think we should have to do the work, we are the equipment.

Our calling as part of the Jesus Movement is to be agents of the Good News regardless of the circumstances or our sense of being ill equipped. This is the only time we have to do the work God gives us to do, and so we must find ways to be about it.

I am offering a class this fall to help us as Christians remember our calling even as we confront the difficulties we face. To structure our conversation, we will use a book by Ron Rolheiser, *Wrestling With God: Finding Hope And Meaning In Our Struggles To Be Human*. Rolheiser defines the task before us as, "not just to survive but to somehow thrive, flourish, and find meaning, happiness, and, not the least, faith—something to believe in and to commit ourselves to in a world where nothing seems solid or permanent." The chapters are not long and are engaging to read.

The text includes topics like wrestling with fear, the gospel mandate to reach out to the poor, faith, and doubt. However, given this particular time, the purpose of using this text is to generate thought and conversation about our mission as followers of Jesus. These classes are always about finding mutual ways to deepen our faith as well as discovering how we are to live faithful lives in this day and time. Consequently, our purpose is not to discover what Ron Rolheiser thinks, but to use his commentary as a prompt for deepening our own thoughts about how to live a holy life in this time. My task is to facilitate that process by introducing the topics, offering prompts for conversation, and sharing my stories of encountering these issues.

Each class will last one hour and is divided into three parts: my opening comments; breakout groups; and plenary. Classes should start at the end of August or beginning of September and end early December. We will skip three weeks due to my being out of town for meetings.

This is the third in a series of classes for laity in the Diocese. Here is a response of participants from a prior class which may offer insights into the class experience:

"Through sharing in our small group discussions, we became aware of God's many loving intentions within each of our life's experiences. Of particular note were his (Bishop Taylor's) personal examples, the ways in which he saw God weaving throughout his life. As he did, this style affirmed to each of us that sharing our personal life stories with God are gifts to others, attuning them so that they, too, could identify where God has walked in their lives."

If you wish to participate, please contact Ms. Anita Lisk at alisk@thediocese.net. If you have questions, you are welcome to contact me at ptaylor@thediocese.net.

May the rest of your summer be renewing.

Peace,

+Porter Taylor