

Technology Overload

Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA, Lynn Hanson, Ministerial Intern & Rev. Stephan Papa
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Opening Words & Chalice Lighting:

“Snatching the eternal out of the desperately fleeting is the great magic trick of human existence.” Tennessee Williams

Reflection/Personal Sharing/Prayer (approximately 30 minutes):

(The facilitator should briefly remind the group of confidentiality/anonymity, that this is not the time for cross conversation, etc.)

Focus Readings:

“What is concealed behind all the diversions, behind hunting and dancing, gambling and sport, behind the social whirl, amorous adventures and acceptance of offices? If we look behind all the masks, we find in the last resort nothing but a fear of being alone: "The sole cause of man's unhappiness is that he does not know how to stay quietly in his room." (Blaise Pascal's Pensees -- the reference is unfortunately too complicated to be more precise here). All the intrigues and bustle -- including heroic deeds in war -- are supposed to divert man from the menacing silence in which he is confronted only with himself: "Man finds nothing so intolerable as to be in a state of complete rest, without passions, without occupation, without diversion, without effort. Then he feels his nullity, loneliness, inadequacy, dependence, helplessness, emptiness. And at once there wells up from the depths of his soul boredom, gloom, depression, chagrin, resentment, despair." *From Hans Kung's Does God Exist?*

“The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most common form, of its innate violence. To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything is to succumb to violence. The frenzy of the activist neutralizes his work for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of his own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful.” From Thomas Merton:

Focus Questions:

What is the biggest effect you feel from having more machines help us do our work? (More leisure time? Less? Doing more work in the same amount of time? Higher expectations from ourselves and others about the amount of work we can and should be doing? The merging of home and work life? Other effects?)

What do you feel the effects have been from greater world-wide communication?

Do you personally feel bombarded with too much information from all our

technology? If so, how do you deal with it?

What do you experience as differences among generations based upon how comfortable the generations are using technology? (Does it seem adults have sometimes switched places with youth in terms of who the experts are?)

Checkout/Likes and Wishes:

(This is the time for facilitators to ask participants what they liked about this meeting and what they might wish for future meetings. This is also the time for any discussion of logistics.)

Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice: *No End in Sight* by Margaret Tsuda

“Why is it
(I sometimes wonder)
that completion is
so elusive?

‘I’m finished!’ we cry
when the last of the dishes
is in the cupboard;
when the last line
of the poem is typed;
when the work desk
is cleared on Friday night.

Then we find
a forgotten spoon
on the dining table;
that the poem didn’t say
all we intended;
on Monday
that Friday’s work was done
on Penelope’s loom.

Is there no surcease
from the unfinished / incomplete,
from fragments, frustrations?
But wait!
Is merely being finished
really a purpose?

Or does the answer lie
in knowing there must be
a secret wholeness
which reveals
its infinite facets
one by one?”