

HOMILY
DIGNITY/BOSTON
JUNE 2, 2019

A few weeks ago I was sharing with my therapist the following recent experiences. One day I was putting away laundry. I was hanging some clothes on my closet rod of which each end was attached to opposite walls. Right after I hung the last article of clothing the rod ripped from one of the closet walls, clothes and hangers spilling to the floor. The rod could no longer hold the weight of unused clothes. I could no longer put off getting rid of old clothing, something which I had been needing to do. Not long after that happened, I was holding Janiyah on my lap. As babies do, she grabbed my eyeglasses and broke the left stem. I could no longer put off getting new eyeglasses, something I had been wanting to do. I said to my therapist, "Huh, maybe the Universe is trying to tell me something. Maybe I need to rid myself of things that weigh me down. Maybe that I don't need to wait for something to break before acting on something I want or need to do. Or, that even in insignificant life events, new life arises from brokenness." I paused, sighed and continued. "I don't even know if I still believe in the Universe giving me messages. That

used to be a strong part of my spirituality. I miss believing that.” A lump formed in my throat. I felt a deep sadness

The next day Marianne, Emily, Finn, Janiyah,, and I went to Barnes and Noble. I usually love walking around, browsing, and buying books. But this visit I was going to stay in the van with Janiyah. Marianne said to me, “Why don't you just come in with Janiya?.” So I took Janiyah in and walked around with no specific section in mind. Eventually I found myself in the personal growth section. My eyes immediately landed on a book titled “ Dear Universe: 200 Mini-Meditations for Instant Manifestations” by Sara Prout. Hmm. I bought the book. My spirituality was rekindled.. Contemplating on the Universe I remembered learning that we are made of the Universe. Iris Schrijver, a professor of pathology at Stanford University and her husband astrophysicist Karel Schrijver, wrote a book titled “Living with the Stars: How the Human Body is Connected to the Life Cycles of the Earth, the Planets, and the Stars.” In an interview Iris says, “ Everything we are and everything in the universe floats through us even today. It directly connects us to the universe, rebuilding our bodies over and again, over our lifetimes.” Carl Sagan once stated,“ the cosmos is within us. We are made of star stuff. We are a way for

the universe to know itself.” Prout writes, quote “We scramble to strike a bargain with a power outside of ourselves. However, it’s only through sparking the connection with that power from within that the change can manifest instantly. These moments are defined beyond religious beliefs, doctrines, and dogma. It transcends the color of your skin, your gender, sexuality, and political views, and invites you to view life through a unified lens...I feel that reverence is something that needs to be constantly experienced. This is the golden thread that binds all of us regardless of which church, temple, mosque, gurdwara, or synagogue we chose to show up to. It’s intentionally engaging with the power of super consciousness and remembering where we originated from- the divine essence of limitless possibility. Whether you call it God, The Divine, Allah, Yahweh, Buddha, Source Energy, The Force, or The Universe, the animating energy behind it all is the same. It’s omnipotent, omnipresent, never-ending, formless, all pervading, and the unconditional loving vibration of all that is and ever has been....This same power holds the stars in the sky and keeps the water in the ocean.” End quote (PAUSE)

And so, we are one with the universe, the universe within us, the universe in humanity and all of creation, the universe that is beyond our comprehension.

In John's gospel, Jesus prays that we may be one with him and one with God, and that in this oneness, the world may know God's love. To be honest, John's Gospel is my least favorite. I didn't find today's reading inspiring. I think it is wordy and heady. However, reading it through the language of the Universe helped this passage become more in tune with my heart and spirit. The more we live in the reality that we are made up of the universe and that the universe binds us together, love will be incarnate within us and within our relationships at all levels.

We are invited to listen to the universe/God within us and to discern what the universe/ God is teaching us. To go back to the experiences I shared earlier of my closet, my eyeglasses, and coming across the meditation book at Barnes and Noble, I again was taught, was reminded, that new life can come from brokenness; that the universe/God will be manifested to me if my eyes and heart are open. Those messages are inspiring, life-giving, renewing. I find, however, that being open to the presence of the universe/God in others can be

stretching, challenging, and can cause immense discomfort. For example, and this is a disturbing example, if connecting with the power of the universe/God transcends political views, how do I even begin to reconcile that I am created of the same “star stuff” of certain powers that be in our nation and church? Of those who are fiercely committed to dismantling the rights of LGBTQI people and the rights women to make decisions regarding their bodies and reproduction? How I do I begin to reconcile that I share the same “stat stuff” with those filled with hatred and violence, who invade places of entertainment, of learning, of worship, of employment, destroying innocent lives? I don’t know. I don’t know...

But I do believe in the fulfillment of Jesus’ prayer that our oneness with God, with Jesus, and with each other will manifest God’s love to our broken world. And I do believe in the universe that is within me and beyond me....., in the universe that is beyond me and within me.... I believe in the universe that is within you....And I believe in the transformative, ever life-giving, justice building, healing power of the universe that is within US....