

Monday Meditation---2020 The Year of the Mask

Two years ago we gathered in the hall of Christ Church during our 2018 Retreat to make peace with the past and plan for our future. In a collaborative effort we formulated a new mission statement.

Together in faith, loving and serving God by helping others.

We pledge to:

- ~ Be led by Holy Spirit
- ~ Embrace differences
- ~ Adapt to changing times

Who would have thought at that time that the hottest new accessory for 2020 would be the face mask?!

And adapt...we have! In fact I think wearing a face mask is adapting to *loving* times, since by wearing a mask we are showing respect and care for our neighbour.

But mask-wearing has its challenges. So many people complain about their glasses fogging up. If you are one of these people, try this easy solution. Take a tissue and fold it in an accordion-pattern. Lay the tissue across the bridge of your nose and put your mask on top. It helps absorb moisture before it makes its way to your glasses.

Another challenge I face is that wearing a mask affects my hearing...for the worse! Maybe since the speaker is also wearing a mask their articulation isn't as crisp as my senior ears would like...I'm not sure. But I am continually asking people to repeat what they said or just trying to fill in the blanks with what I think makes sense.

That was why I was very nervous about my annual hearing test this past summer. What a shock I had when I was told I had to keep my mask on! I was in the "isolation" booth with the headset on, waiting to hear the little beeps, when all I could hear was my own breathing. So I had to hold my breath and listen for the beeps, which of course got fainter and fainter. To guarantee that *I* didn't get *fainter and fainter*, I had to wait for the appropriate moment to take a big breath and hope I didn't miss a beep! Luckily, I was told the "good" news. My hearing was the same as last year...in other words, it's not great but not getting any worse, yet!

However, there is no reason I should even complain at all about wearing a mask. How long do I wear it? An hour at the most...Look at all our medical frontline workers, teachers, students, store clerks, who have to wear a mask *all day long*. Shame on me for even one second of complaining!

By the way...all you Scrabble players...did you know *maskne* is a new word in the dictionary this year? *Maskne* means acne or some type of skin irritation that results from wearing a medical, N95 or cloth face mask. It is especially prevalent among healthcare and other frontline workers.

Enough of my ramblings...my prime objective today is to share a prayer with you, written by Richard Bott, who gives permission for it to be shared non-commercially.

A prayer as I put on my mask:

Creator,
as I prepare to go into the world,
help me to see the sacrament
in the wearing of this cloth -
let it be an “outward sign
of an inward grace” -
a tangible and visible way of living
love for my neighbours,
as I love myself.

Christ,
since my lips will be covered,
uncover my heart,
that people would see my smile
in the crinkles around my eyes.
Since my voice may be muffled,
help me to speak clearly,
not only with my words,
but with my actions.

Holy Spirit,
As the elastic touches my ears,
remind me to listen carefully -
and full of care -
to all those I meet.
May this simple piece of cloth be
shield and banner,
and each breath that it holds,
be filled with your love.

In your Name and
in that love,
I pray.

May it be so.
May it be so.

Richard Bott

Wishing you great peace and joy in 2021,
Bernadette