

Lenten Encounter Week 4: The Soul needs images to 'know' things.

Ezekiel 47:1-9,12; Psalm 46, John 5:1-16.

Human lives are made of moments, happenings and what become anecdotal events, some of which we generalize about and make into full "belief systems".

Art, pictures, snapshot biographies, metaphors and stories have the ability to do this very **quickly and deeply** for us. They touch and gather the unconscious much more than concepts do. When our varied experience coalesce into a 'picture' it has much more power for us to either heal, hurt or at least change us. The Bible presents us with healing stories and images that allow us to reconfigure our life with God and in truth.

A deeply healing metaphor is water. Ezekiel presents water flowing from every side of the (destroyed) temple as a source of life, endless fertility: all living creatures, fish and trees "whose fruit shall serve as food, and their leaves for medicine". What an excellent image of Divine Abundance and the universal flourishing that comes from it.

In John's Gospel, the pool of Bethesda (house of mercy), healing waters for a man right there, but not making use of it. He is paralyzed in spirit and body.

Jesus knows all about him, empowers him, mirrors his best self for the man- gives the man back to himself, by giving **His self**. Jesus also warns him not to turn back to his paralysis or "something worse will overtake you"

When we are restored, we have to take responsibility for ourselves, face our own lives and stand on our own courageous feet. We need healing images and courageous people to image us at our best. Nothing else will invite us into the flowing waters of the temple and the always bubbling pool of divine mercy.

- When has God been most present to you?
- What might be your 'mattress' in your life that you need to pick up and move from?
- When, and from what situation in your life, has God brought resurrection?

"Healing God, give me the courage to move forward, and help me to see that my deeper sin might be my unwillingness to keep growing"