

Homily for May 17, 2020

Jeremiah 29: 1, 4-7

Pastor Liz Miller

We are entering our 10th week of Michigan's Stay at Home order. 10 weeks of sleeping, eating, working, relaxing, crafting, working out, cooking, and distantly socializing in the same 1300 square feet. I have become intimate with every corner and crack of my house. I predict that the trends of open concept houses and tiny homes will soon come to an end.

I have been working at home fulltime these past few months, but there was a part of me that kept saying it was temporary. I created tiny protests like not unpacking my books from the office, but instead using and returning them to the same bag each time, stored next to the front door waiting to be returned to their rightful place in the church. Instead of finding a place to hang my robe and stoles, I slung them over the stair banister. I had a desk to work from but it was cluttered with bills needing filing, shoe boxes needing recycling, and stuff that had accumulated over the years instead of finding their proper homes. These tiny protests were expression of my stubbornness, my longing for normal, my grief that would quickly fall into the shame grief that so many others have given up so much more than I have.

This week I finally made space for myself to work. I cleaned off my desk. I unpacked my book bag and arranged the books between my favorite bookends. I hung up a calendar so I could remember what day it is. I put a hook on the back of the office door to hang my robe and stoles.

It was bittersweet, but it also felt empowering to create space for this new reality - to make a new kind of home for myself. It will allow me to be more present instead of getting

caught up on the past or what should be. It allows me to dream of the future but know that for now I am comfortable enough, whether it lasts for a few more weeks, a few more months, or another year.

The prophet Jeremiah told the Israelites to make a home wherever they were, even when that home did not feel like home, even when they longed for the past and grieved for their future. Make a home where you are. Settle in. Do not put life on hold, but find a way to forge new life. Build new houses. Create new relationships. Find new work. Part of the beauty and strength of humanity is our resilience. Our ability to find new life, to adapt, to try again.

Jeremiah tells the Israelites that wherever they find themselves, even if it is in a place where they feel captive, to pray to God for its welfare, for its prosperity. Pray to God even in the difficult places you find yourself, because your future depends on it. Our future depends on being able to find a home in a strange land and to make our way forward together, in community. Not back to where we came from, but into an unimagined future. And that future begins now, right here, at home.