

*Reminders and Resources for the spring 2024 Homily Series*

**Spring Cleaning for the Soul**

Week One — Cluttered & Overwhelmed

Most of us feel cluttered and overwhelmed in our lives, leaving little room to connect with God or to recognize, let alone answer, promptings from the Holy Spirit. We need to remove the many forms of clutter that overwhelm us and crowd out our souls. We need to make room in our lives for our souls to breathe, expand, and come to life. In doing so we can reclaim the energy, creativity, and wisdom God has deposited into us.

Gospel Connection: (Gospel — Lk 24:35-48)

We read of Jesus' appearance to the disciples in Jerusalem. At first they were afraid and thought they were seeing a ghost, but then they were amazed by his presence. Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures and he pointed to the mission before them.

*In the Gospel we find people who are struggling to see Jesus, to understand who he is, to experience his presence. For them it was fear that got in the way. What is it for us today? Many of us don't know how to find an access point to God in the first place. Our souls are buried in the things of this world. We are cluttered and overwhelmed.*

Keep in Mind:

1. **All forms of clutter crowd out the soul.** Clutter can be many things — physical clutter, schedule clutter, office clutter, digital clutter, mental/emotional clutter, etc. When so many spaces of our lives are filled to the brim our souls don't get to come up for air, much less move. Our health is impacted negatively as we feel stressed, overcommitted, and under-connected
2. **We need to explore the reasons we get stuck.** Four reasons are: unrealistic expectations, limiting beliefs, lack of boundaries, and an inordinate or disordered attachment to "stuff." Many of us have bought into the lies of our American culture, that more is better or that being busy means you must be important.
3. **Recognize we all view clutter differently.** It's been said that "One person's trash is another person's treasure." If you live with other people, you live with their clutter too (and chances are they do not regard it as clutter). This can be very challenging. We need to be mindful of how our "stuff" impacts one another and be respectful in how we manage these differences.

*"There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence to which the idealist most easily succumbs: activism and overwork. 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 concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything, is to succumb to violence. The frenzy of our activism neutralizes our work for peace. It destroys our own inner capacity for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of our own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful." — Thomas Merton*

“Clutter is a temper tantrum of the soul, and it's time to listen closely to what it's saying.”  
— Kerri Richardson

### Listening to My Soul

— Joyce Rupp

Guardian of my deepest Self, I need to be still, to listen,  
not only to falling leaves and the gentle wind;  
I need to listen to my soul,  
too long neglected  
while I bowed to the wild cries  
of my greedy culture,  
ever ravenous  
for my undivided attention:  
Do more, Buy more,  
See more, Be more, Go more.

I am weary  
with feeding this huge mouth  
that devours my soul.

Let me be still  
amid the beauty of earth.  
Let me be a silent admirer  
of all that is sacred.  
Let me be reverent  
in the presence of another.  
Let me restore my inner eye.  
Let me put to rest the wildness  
of endless activity.

Let me end my seeking  
the glitter of streets  
that go nowhere.  
Amen.

#### Resources:

- “If the Devil Can’t Make You Bad, He’ll Make You Busy” article by Jim Burns: <https://www.praise.com/articles/if-devil-cant-make-you-bad-make-you-busy>
- “Embracing Enoughness” article by Richard Rohr: <https://cac.org/daily-meditations/embracing-enoughness-2020-06-30/>
- *From Clutter to Clarity* book by Kerri Richardson
- “Beyond the Mind’s Clutter: Finding Presence” video by Eckhart Tolle: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sY0APKqHZRQ>:
- *Speaking of Psychology* “Why clutter stresses us out” podcast with Deacon Joseph Ferrari, PhD: <https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/clutter>