

Living well through Advent

Week Two

Friday 9 December 2022

A Spoon and a Prayer

Practice makes progress, not perfection.

Unknown

Perfectionism is something I've wrestled with most of my life. During a workshop years ago, one of my favourite teachers of growth and change, Tom Condon, prescribed a practice for those of us who struggled with the need to do things perfectly. He suggested that we purposefully drop a spoon on the floor in a restaurant. He explained that we do this in order to learn that not only will we not die from a lethal dose of mortification, we may learn, as we practice being "imperfect," to loosen the grip perfectionism has on us so that we may experience more ease as we move through our lives. We may come to feel a sense of "enoughness" as we let go of the belief that we need to be perfect in order to belong.

After I finally worked up enough courage to drop a spoon on the floor of a restaurant, not much happened, on the outside. The sky didn't fall. The only person who noticed was the waiter, who promptly replaced my utensil. That's it. But on the inside, I experienced a significant shift. Through this simple little act, I realized that what I'd been telling myself about what would happen if I wasn't perfect simply wasn't true.

What is true is that when we aren't driven by a need to be perfect, we are much more relaxed, open, and trusting. Perhaps when we can let go of perfectionism, we will be freer to accept, enjoy, and connect with our imperfect selves while trusting that despite—or because of—our imperfections, we know we are a beloved and cherished child of the Holy One.

Making it Personal:

- ◆ Can you relate to the struggle with a need to be perfect?
- ◆ This can be especially true this time of year.
- ◆ Can you think of one simple practice or prayer you could incorporate into your day that would help you to be more accepting, patient, and kind, toward yourself, and toward others?

Practice makes progress, not perfection.