

LENT II - The Chrysalis

March 27, 2022



What is the Chrysalis?

Begin by watching this video about what is happening inside a chrysalis:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uK_izz4Bx2o

After you watch the video, answer these questions:

1. What is the difference between a cocoon and a chrysalis?
2. What happens to the caterpillar in the chrysalis? Use your own words. You do not need to have the scientific or technical names for the enzymes but if you want them, they are on the back page.
3. What is the reddish liquid that spills out when butterflies escape the chrysalis?
4. How did scientists discover that butterflies can remember their caterpillar days? What does this tell us?
5. Is the time spent in the chrysalis rest or work or both? Explain your answer.

Lent - A Time Set Apart

Our lives are busy. There are so many things that pull at our attention – school, activities, family, friends, church, clubs, homework, pets, etc. It can feel like there is not enough time in the day to do all we need or want to do.

Last time, we thought about Lent as a time of transformation, change, and growth. We used the image of weeds to help us discuss what distracts us from paying attention to God and our own hearts and thoughts.

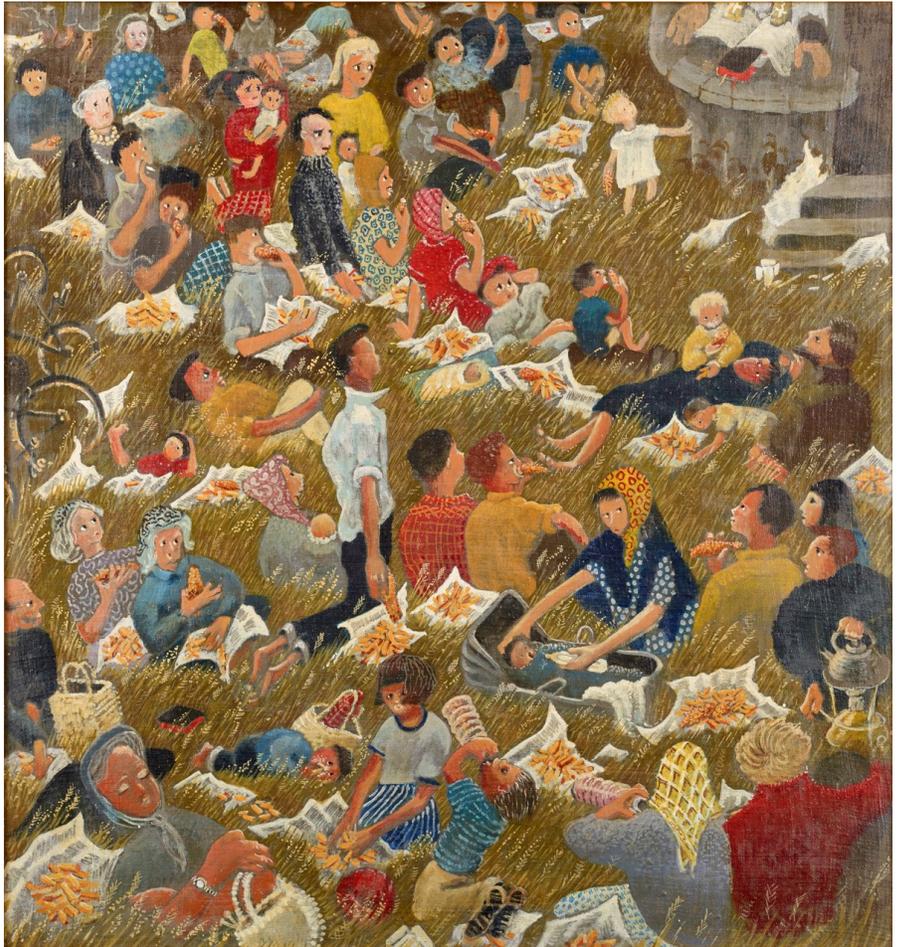
This week, we will talk about Lent as time we set aside or a time we make room for God. We will start by reading a familiar story about Jesus. Pay close attention to how the disciples are feeling at the beginning of the story and what Jesus suggests. You will notice that things did not go as planned, but that is often the way things happen, isn't it?!

Bible Study - Feeding the 5000

Read Mark 6:30-44

³⁰ The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ³¹ Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. ³³ But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.



The Five Thousand by Eularia Clarke

³⁵ By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. “This is a remote place,” they said, “and it’s already very late. ³⁶ Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” ³⁷ But he answered, “You give them something to eat.” They said to him, “That would take more than half a year’s wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?” ³⁸ “How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.” When they found out, they said, “Five loaves of bread and two fish.”



³⁹ Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² They all ate and were satisfied, ⁴³ and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. ⁴⁴ The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

Feeding the Five Thousand by Tammy Rogers

After you have read the Scripture text and looked at the artwork, reflect on these questions:

- At the beginning of the story, how do you think the disciples were feeling? Why?
- What was Jesus' suggestion to the disciples? What happened instead?
- Jesus taught the crowds for so long it was late and people needed dinner. What was the disciples' solution to this problem? What was Jesus' solution to the problem?
- Knowing how the disciples were feeling at the beginning of the story, how do you think they felt about being told to feed the crowd?
- There would have been more than 5000 people there because the "5000" only referred to the men. How do the artists show this in their paintings?
- Look at the painting by Eularia Clarke. Who do you see pictured? How is this different than the image you had in your head of the feeding of the 5000? What do you think they are eating? (*answer on back page*)



Feeding the Three Thousand by Hyatt Moore

The Importance of Rest

One of the reasons Bible stories are so meaningful is that they describe what it is like to be human. In this story, the disciples were worn out. They have been traveling and teaching. When they stopped traveling for a time, people were coming and going. They had almost no time alone and no time to rest. Have you ever felt like you could not get enough rest? Have you ever craved time alone in your room? That is how the disciples were feeling.

Jesus suggested they take a little time away, a mini-vacation of sorts. They were going to go to a quiet place and rest. Ah. That must have sounded lovely. But, the crowd heard about their plan and beat them to the quiet place. What kind of place was it now?

Among other things, this is a story about rest and work. Jesus understood that the disciples were tired. He knew that human beings cannot go to school, visit friends, play sports, plant a pollinator garden, walk the dog, do their homework, read a book, watch a movie, clean the house, and _____ (what else would you add to the list?) without getting really worn out. Everyone, even Jesus, needs time to rest. There are many stories in Scripture in which Jesus found a quiet place to pray. He understood we all need time for rest.

We rest so we will have the energy to serve and love others. We rest so we can pay attention to what matters most to us. If all we do is go, go, go, it is hard to pay attention. We do not have enough time for the people we love. We lack the energy needed to plant a pollinator garden for the lovely monarchs.

Why do you need rest?

Animals are some of our best teachers. Martin, our 15-year-old cat, is an expert napper and knows how to relax, just about anywhere. What do the animals in your life teach you about rest?





The Chrysalis - Setting Aside Time

How did you answer the question? Is the caterpillar resting or working? Why?

I think it is both. The caterpillar is not moving or eating (it has no digestive track at one point). It is hanging in its chrysalis and waiting and resting before it becomes a butterfly. But it is also working. It is transforming or changing into a butterfly. That involves turning into goo before it regrows its body and creates its magnificent wings.

The thing is that a butterfly cannot become a butterfly without the chrysalis. Without the time (8 to 15 days) set aside in the chrysalis, the caterpillar would remain a caterpillar.

Lent - Setting Aside Time

We must also set aside time to grow and change. Lent is a time of preparing for Easter, a season in which we pay close attention to new life. Easter is a time of wonder and surprise and thanksgiving. We are grateful for this life we live, even though it is sometimes hard and busy. Easter Sunday and every little Easter (Sundays) after should be a time of awe, wonder, and gratitude for this life God has given us.

But to experience awe and wonder, we need to take a break, rest, and set some time aside to pay attention. We need to make enough space in our lives and schedules to be awestruck (what does that mean?). If we are always busy it is hard to notice the good things around us and then we are much less likely to give thanks to God.

Take a moment to look around you and then take turns answering these questions:

- What do you see?
- What do you hear?
- What do you smell?
- What is beautiful or interesting?
- How are you feeling?
- Was there anything today that filled you with wonder?
- For what do you want to say thank you to God?



Test yourself: Is this monarch a male or a female?
Do you remember how to tell the difference?

Lenten Spiritual Practices

During Lent, I will offer ideas for spiritual practices, which are actions we take to help us tend to our faith. As we have discussed, spiritual practices are meant to help us clear away some of the distractions in our lives so that you can pay attention and focus. They also help us rest for a short time. Spiritual practices are called practices for a reason. They take practice. We do not learn to pay attention or learn to sit quietly and rest our bodies and minds overnight. Spiritual practices are supposed to be practiced over and over and throughout our lives. Some practices you will like and others you will not. Find the ones you like and practice those.

Breath Prayer

The Breath Prayer is a very simple prayer. It relies on the most basic aspect of life - the inhale and exhale of your breath. The breath prayer links a word or phrase to each part of your breath. For example, you may use the phrase: "O God, be with me." To offer a breath prayer you breathe in and silently say, "O God." As you breathe out, you silently say, "be with me." You then repeat this over and over. In: "O God." Out: "be with me."

You can write your own breath prayer. Think of what you want. Peace. Rest. Joy. Healing. Comfort. Love. This is your petition, a fancy word for the thing for which you want to ask God. Then, put God's name or Jesus' name or the Spirit's name in front of your petition. You can also pick a phrase from Scripture or any phrase you like, and turn it into a breath prayer.

Here are some examples. Feel free to use one of these or make your own.

"God, give me peace."

"Jesus, stay with me."

"Spirit, give me rest."

"When I am afraid, I will trust you."

"Be still"

"God, thank you"

"You are, with me"

"You are, love"

To help you remember your breath prayer and this spiritual practice, write it on a piece of paper and put it on your bathroom mirror or somewhere else in your home that you will see it often. Each time, it catches your attention, breathe in and out and repeat your prayer. The breath prayer is a form of rest. It will help you set time aside for your own breath and for God. Sometimes long deep breaths are the most needed form of rest and will calm you when worried or scared. Breathe deeply, my friends.

Image by Julie Johnson



Answers

Page 1:

The technical terms for what is happening inside the chrysalis:

- Caspases - enzymes that dissolve and rip apart the caterpillars cells in the muscles, digestive system, and other organs.
- Imaginal disks build the butterfly. Each disk has a recipe to form a different part of an adult butterfly.

Page 3:

The people in the painting by Eularia Clarke in the upper right hand corner of the page are eating fish and chips (fried fish and French fries), a very popular meal in Britain.

Page 4: The butterfly is a female. It has thick black lines and does not have the two dots at the bottom of the lower wings that signify a male.

Resources & Credit:

The image of the caterpillar on the milkweed leaf on page 1 is taken from Monarch Butterfly Garden and can be found here: <https://monarchbutterflygarden.net/milkweed-plant-seed-resources/asclepias-purpurascens-purple-milkweed/>

The Five Thousand by Eularia Clarke (1914-1970) is in the Methodist Modern Art Collection CLA/1965/1. You can find more about Eularia Clarke and her work at <https://eulariaclarke.co.uk/>

Feeding the Five Thousand by Tammy Rogers is sold here: <https://pixels.com/featured/feeding-the-five-thousand-tammy-rogers.html>

Feeding the Three Thousand by Hyatt Moore can be found here: https://www.hyattmoore.com/artist/mural_feeding.php and more about the artist at www.hyattmoore.com

The image of the caterpillar transforming into a chrysalis is from <https://www.shutterstock.com/g/cathykeifer>

The image of the monarch on milkweed to the right is from the Monarch Butterfly Garden website.

For more about breath prayer, visit <https://www.asacredjourney.net/how-to-practice-breath-prayer/>. You may also like this video offering five possible breath prayers and their origin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsGNZCXJGCY>

