“***Enough is a verb, a conversation, a fugue, a collaboration. It is not a static state, something achieved or accomplished. It is relational, by nature unpredictable, punctuated by wonder, surprise, and awe. It may feel dangerous and inefficient. It demands that we stay awake, pay attention to what is true in this moment, in our hearts, and make the choices always and only from that place. Then whatever we decide brings a sense of rightness and sufficiency, arriving with an exhale, a letting go, a sense that this, here, for now, is enough."*** Those words, from Wayne Muller, author of A Life of Being, Having, and Doing Enough.

Today, in our month of Giving it Up for Gratitude, we take a look at how much is enough. We try to take that view of our lives from another vehicle. Just as Barbara Merritt did in our reading. There she was preaching on simplicity while they followed what she called ‘a visible study in recreational excess.’ What does our life look like being hauled up Route 95 on the way to Maine. Not just for a summer vacation but if we were moving. Take a moment and however many u-hauls you need to at least get a sense of how large your life is, or isn’t when it comes to your stuff.

Now, back off of that scary image and fill up an SUV or other vehicle with all of your clothing. Include all outerwear, sportswear, shoes, boots, etc. I’d need most of the front seat for my socks alone! That’s a hard admission, but true. Be honest, and when you think you’ve managed to picture what it would take to get ***all*** of your clothing into a vehicle, rise in body or spirit if you are willing to share what vehicle, or vehicles, it took to do so.

Sharing….

‘Enough’ is such a tricky thing. I’ve come to appreciate that ‘enough’ on pantry shelves for a child, now adult, of the depression look different than ‘enough’ looks like to a child, now adult for whom daily stops at a grocery store never included counting pennies or clipping coupons. ‘Enough’ for someone imprinted with a familial pattern of success that seemed unachievable throughout life is different than enough for someone drawn to a nomadic life where having things slowed one down. ‘Enough’ for a bread winner in an uncertain occupation is likely different than enough to a person with a trust fund or guaranteed employment and different than ‘enough’ for someone living on disability or another fixed income.

Overlay all of that with the fact that we are drowning in a societal framework that pushes gift giving year round, creates enormous expectations through brilliantly evil advertising and the sad fact that none of that is likely to change. The only thing we know we can change is ourselves, our patterns of consumption, our patterns of having things and our understanding of ‘enough!’

‘Enough’ is relational and as a people of faith we are called to see it in relationship to others around us and throughout the world. Who else here remembers hearing “eat what’s on your plate – there are children starving in ………………” (for my generation, it was Biafra.) That’s one way of looking at that relationality. This month, we’re pushing it further --- or actually closer. Someone nearby can use this piece of clothing more. My closet is down by almost half and life doesn’t seem any different. Perhaps I already had ‘enough.’ Perhaps ‘enough’ is even less.

Our equation for ‘enough’ must take into account what we need, really, really, really need + sharing with our siblings who need more – and working hard to consider them siblings if we’re not there yet ---- + considering what having more than enough does to our world. It is not simple math but like any good equation, if you break it down into pieces it’s doable. This week we just need to be in that car, following that vehicle with our clothing in it and deciding for ourselves what is ‘enough.’ Thanks to Tricia Sullivan who is leading our distribution, we can accept that someone needs it, whatever ‘it’ is, more. We can take on the suggestion from two weeks ago, to place a number on how many things we should have (remember Mr. 100 things who blew it the first week after getting down to 100 but is trying again?). Or we can set percentage goals and empty ½ or 1/3 or 9/10ths of our closet. I’m considering the approach of x number of dress pants, y number of jackets, etc. I start getting nervous when I think of setting a limit on bathing suits, sweat shirts and gym shorts ………… but today I can give up one of each.

We cannot judge ‘enough’ for one another. But we are better for asking the question of ourselves and even better if we are able to move today’s enough down a notch or two. Because what is true, even if we are here today without a home, with holes in our socks, in need of a new winter coat, we have far more than the vast majority of the world. Far more.

And now, let there be a time of sharing. Like last week, I invite you forward with your donations. Anything needing a bit of repair goes to Nancy Diaz so we are sure to pass along things in good order. And let’s have a sampling of what was easy to give up, what was more difficult, perhaps someone brought something quite difficult to give away.

SHARING

I’ll close with more from Muller:

"A life of enough is born in every moment — in the way we listen, the way we respond to the world, the way we see what is and tell the truth of who we are. Every single choice, every single moment, every change of course can bring us closer to a life of peace, contentment, authenticity, and easy sufficiency, a life of being, having, and doing enough."