

From: Rev Brian Goodings (self-isolating in my office at Trinity UC)
(Warning...the following may contain scenes of violence and almost-profanity.
Reader discretion is advised- but also encouraged!)

I smacked my shin on the coffee table in my office the other day and instead of using any number of choice words I might usually utter...I said "COVID". Seems that I have acquired a new profanity. Felt good to say it with vehemence actually- the word gets far too much respectable air time already. Like those T-shirts some people wear that say "&\$#@ CANCER". We've gotta take some power back from this nasty bug.

All of us should be worried and with good reason, but there are things we can do. One of them might be to start to throw stones at the beast. I read a quote the other day by Kurt Goldstein about the difference between anxiety and fear. He said, "Fear sharpens the senses, but anxiety freezes them."

I'll never forget that scene from the movie "*Braveheart*" (ya love it or hate it). The ragtag band of Scots are facing a most formidable enemy on the battlefield and just before the battle begins, they turn away from them in unison, flip up their kilts (yep) and roar in defiance. Good image for us.

The single most common phrase in our scripture is "*Do not fear*". I believe God "intended" it to mean, don't just freeze when life get crazy. When a bear shows up don't act like dinner. God is on the side of "*those who help themselves and their neighbours*".

Last week, when the spectre of the virus became real, anxiety was running high and most of us froze. A few took advantage of the pause to raid the grocery stores and take more than their fair share (you know who you are) but most of us didn't know what to do. We were anxious.

Now, although it sounds strange, we're fearful BUT our heightened senses are giving us strength. We are responding in good ways to the threat. Breweries are making hand cleansers and delivering them in beer cans, the automotive and other industries are rejigging their machinery to make medical safety equipment. We are not powerless and even as I write there are labs working full out on trying to create a vaccine within months not years.

I was actually thinking about the (necessary) weirdness it has created in our social interactions...it's really strange to stand so far away from each other. I'm proposing we might create a standard of measurement based on our current reality called "The Covid". It's not exact, somewhere between 6 and 10 feet, the distance we are now putting between each other when we meet.

Whereas we used to lean in and even touch each other, now we stay apart and circle, like adversaries in a boxing ring. I really, really don't like it. We could use it in everyday language as in, "I almost fell off the sidewalk the other day trying to avoid getting closer than *A Covid* with a passerby". Or we could use the term as a measurement of negativity for people we don't like... we might say "I wouldn't get within a *Covid's-length* of them." Or a missed putt in golf might be described, by your laughing buddies, as "You're still a *Covid* and half away!" You get the point I'm sure.

But once this horribly stressful period is over (and one day it will be over), we could use the nasty word, sparingly or not at all. It might even become an epithet we would only use, say, if we smashed our thumb with a hammer. Or something we would have shouted when the Leafs lost to Boston in 2013 even though they were up 3 goals with only a few minutes to play in game 7. (I'm still not over that...)

Someday we might have to explain its origins to our grandchildren but hopefully they wouldn't have a clue what we are talking about. Sort of like when we use British Imperial Units like a "thou" or "rood" or "perch". It would simply become one of those standards of measure that has passed out of common usage because it isn't needed.

I look forward to the time when all of us struggle to remember the name of..."the nasty little weird looking virus with the sticky up parts" because it has disappeared.

And so will the need for the distance between us. Thank God for that!

But in the meantime, stay at least a *COVID APART...and ROAR!!!!!!*