

Prayer: Hush! Hush! My soul be calm and still.  
Come, blessed Savior, enter in.  
Forgive our sins... [silence],  
Heal all our ills... [silence],  
Give strength for tasks... [silence],  
Give peace of mind... [silence],  
And make our spirits wholly Thine.  
And we shall praise thee ever more.  
Amen, Amen, Amen.

Black History Month: "Hush: When Words Really Aren't Necessary"

A newspaper reporter has said that in this fast-paced world of ours it may very well be that a Sunday morning homily is one of those very few moments when people have a chance to be quiet and reflect on the meaning of their lives. So, let's become quiet.

It has been over 150 years since slavery ended in the United States. Since then, there have been many people leading movements and overcoming adversities to continue the fight against racism. While there has been much progress in the way of civil rights, equal opportunity, and reduced discrimination, it is easy to forget the individuals who broke out of societal norms and the challenges they faced during their journeys.

Despite inventions by Black Americans that changed the world, achievements that topped world records, and movements that were met with unimaginable challenges, there continues to be a gap in the biographies of these amazing people that are available in the digital age. We are at risk of forgetting the pioneers who took part in shaping the communities of their time and led the way towards equality, impacting future decades and centuries.

Hush, hush  
Somebody's callin my name  
Hush, hush  
Somebody's callin my name  
Hush hush  
Somebody's callin my name  
Oh, my lord, oh my lord, what shall I do

In many Black traditions, "hush" is a word of comfort, not a word of silencing. It is what a loving parent might say to console a child who has fallen and hurt themselves; it is a word of comfort, reassurance, and love often used when someone is acutely experiencing pain, grief, or suffering.

In the words of this haunting spiritual, "Hush, hush. Somebody's calling your name" listen to the mystery of your life. Listen to all those moments in your life when, if you could just be quiet and dare to be open, somebody's calling you. Listen to and grasp again those moments in your life when your heart has been broken by possibly the pain of the death of a loved one, or you've just said goodbye to a relationship-in that moment, you're never the same again. Or maybe when your heart's been broken open with joy, like maybe the birth of a child, grandchild or when you've just said hello to a new and beautiful relationship, and you're never the same again.

Listen to the moments of your life when the kingdoms of your world become touched and transformed and changed by the touch of the kingdom of God. A small epiphany happens in your life in that moment, and you're never the same again. Listen, listen to your life.

Robert Frost wrote:

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

There are moments in life that make all the difference. Hush, somebody's calling.

If we can understand this about our own life, then maybe we're ready to travel with Jesus. In the Gospel story today, Jesus is at the very early days of his public ministry. He's just been baptized in the Jordan River. He's learned in that experience that he is God's beloved Child, God's Son. Then the Spirit drives Jesus out into the wilderness, and he experiences a time of temptation. A time where he makes decisions about different roads, and Jesus chooses the one less traveled. Then he goes back to Galilee, to begin his public ministry.

Jesus journeys throughout the synagogues of Galilee, and news spreads about him. They find him remarkable. He's one who speaks with authority and talks firsthand about the kingdom of God. Then he comes to his own hometown, to that synagogue in which he grew up in Nazareth. Jesus of Nazareth comes home, and the congregation welcomes him back because they've heard good things about him. They invite him to be a lay reader. He unrolls the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and begins to read:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and the recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

All eyes and ears are on him. Then he states boldly and clearly: Today Isaiah's Scripture is fulfilled in me.

Then to himself he must have said, "My God, I've gone public with it. My God, I'm out of the closet. My God, my God, I've said it. 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,' and I'm the Anointed One. I'm the Christ." Jesus has come to a road that diverges and he makes a decision, and he's never the same again, ever.

Hear the voice saying, "Hush, somebody's calling your name." You see, we miss my point, friends, if we think that's a story just about Jesus. The point of the story is that that's a story about you. Jesus is every single one of us. So, that's your story, and it's my story.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon you, because the Lord has anointed you. You are God's beloved. You have a vocation, a calling from God, to be God's beloved child. You are God's own child. Hush, today somebody's calling your name.

Revelation 7:14 reads. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

"Hush" is a word of comfort, not a word of silencing. This timely comfort can come as a God hug. Hush as His hugs soothe, comfort and calm. He is never late in offering His affection or too busy to stand still and embrace His human creation. The Spirit gently caresses burdened shoulders and rubs out raw pain from the backs of believers. His compassion has never failed. His mercy is fresh every day. Like a cool cream alleviates an itchy rash, so His balm of grace relieves a rash of worries. A God hug holds on until healing occurs. He holds on tight. "Hush" somebody's calling my name.

The Lamb Jesus, serves as the Great Shepherd who will tenderly lead those who have suffered to springs of living water. Though He is the sovereign judge, and Lion of Judah—Jesus continues to shepherd His sheep, whose hearts are heavy and hurting. Tears trickle into the hands of the One who holds the world in His hands and wipes away weeping with His gentle touch. Sheep who look to their compassionate Shepherd for care—will not despair—but be aware of His secure affection.

“For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones” (Isaiah 49:13).

“Hush” A God hug does not happen on the run, but when we stand still. ‘Slow down my child,’ He says, ‘Hush, I have this,’ ‘Be still, let Me hold you.’ ‘Rest in My arms.’ So, we learn to stay stationary by faith and trust the right activities will get done in the right time. When we schedule appointments to be loved by the Lord, we receive strength for the journey. Otherwise, we exhaust our ability to encourage without the infusion of Christ’s courage. His hugs hearten. The Lord comforts us, so we can comfort others.

Shout for joy in praise to your Creator for His comfort and compassion. Brag on His name and extol Him for His divine affection. Like the father of the prodigal son who returned home, your Father in Heaven can’t wait to embrace you in your shame, stress or success. He runs to greet you with warm acceptance, so throw yourself into His arms. Cast your cares on Christ and abandon your life to the Lord. Invite His affections to become your affections. Yes, enjoy His sweet embrace!

“I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow” (Jeremiah 31:13).

“Hush: When Words Really Aren’t Necessary” Amen. Amen. Amen.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I receive your love and affection. Thanks for your comforting hugs just when I need them.