

Over two decades ago, I was at a conference where Mark 5 was the focus for the day. The presenter, Megan McKenna, invited us to consider the hemorrhaging woman's reality of basically having no life for 12 years while her bleeding condition made her unclean and, thus, unable to be in full relationship with her community and family. Megan's approach was to have us take a few minutes and try to remember what was going on in our lives 12 years ago, and then everything (everything *of significance*, anyway) that had happened since. What if a medical condition had prevented us from fully experiencing those things. How would that have impacted us? How would our lives have been different?

It was a powerful experience—clearly ... I remember it more than 2 decades later!—and one I've used myself for other biblical stories that include known lengths of time (even if they're meant to be understood symbolically). The Israelites wondering in the wilderness for 40 years ... Jesus tempted in the wilderness for 40 days ... Noah and his ark companions enduring 40 days AND 40 nights of rain (what's with the Bible and the number 40?? Hm ... 😊). What was I doing 40 years ago? What was I doing 40 days (and nights!) ago? You get the idea. It can be a fruitful exploration.

But one doesn't need the Bible and its stories to enter into this practice. One simply needs the IRS. We've been told to keep our tax records for 7 years (another significant biblical number, by the way!). When I annually sit down to do my taxes, therefore, I haul out the little storage box with these yearly bundles and dutifully dispose of the now 8-years-ago compilation to make room for this past year's receipts and paperwork.

Last year, as I was shredding the records for 2014, I noticed a few things that reminded me of how I had been given a 6-month sabbatical that year, a respite that had saved my life in many respects. "Gosh, it's been that long already," I mused. "By church standards, I'm due for another one!" (Hope springs eternal ...) Unfortunately, I had already destroyed most of that year's paperwork by the time I had reached that realization, so couldn't more fully reminisce about the multi-levelled journey I had taken in 2014, but I vowed to make this a conscious ritual each year going forward.

So, what was I reminded of this past week as I meticulously went through the papers from my 2015 taxes?

~ I started that year leading a storytelling pilgrimage to Israel/Palestine with the good folks from St. David's and Redeemer Episcopal Churches.

~ I was still an AAA member.

~ I was still buying music from the Apple store.



- ~ I was still selling DVDs of my performances and matted photographs I had taken.
- ~ I only paid \$199.99 for a new 6S iPhone with 64 GB.
- ~ I had something work-related every day but eight in April.
- ~ Being Year B in the lectionary, I performed the Gospel of Mark several times.
- ~ Cosima apparently hadn't opened yet because Donna's was still in my neighborhood.
- ~ That was the year Lynn White died.
- ~ I needed stye ointment for my eye.
- ~ November is when I had the MRI for my right shoulder.
- ~ I had PT in December.
- ~ I'd gotten quarterly massages.

I don't know that there's anything earthshattering there but there were a couple of points of interest. The MRI had revealed a torn rotator cuff and I'm assuming the PT had been for that. While I still notice some mobility issues with that arm, the ensuing years must have basically healed it. Thank God! Of course, my *left* shoulder is now the issue and it's been much more painful than I remember my right shoulder being. Is it time for more PT or do I just let it heal itself?

I've been getting styes several times a year for the last couple of years ... or so I thought. I didn't realize that had started *eight* years ago. I don't ever remember getting a stye the first 50 years of my life. What's different now that might be causing them?

If Make America Great Again includes going back to a time when new iPhones could be procured for only \$199.99, I might be persuaded to join that bandwagon!

As lovely as Cosima is, it's too steep for my pocketbook, even during productive Year-B-performance-of-Mark work. More importantly, I miss Donna's.

I really miss Lynn.

And I REALLY miss the pampering of quarterly massages!