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# Repetition Power

It's that time of year—again.

All sorts of new beginnings or “start-ups”: a new calendar year, a new session in our U.S. Congress (if the 2005 session ever concludes, that is!). It's a U.S. election year, too—all seats of the House of Representatives and a third of the U.S. Senate (but not our KY U.S. Senators this time); Kentucky has over 4000 elected positions to fill in 2006.

New beginnings are gifts to be appreciated—if sometimes entailing wrenching change.

There is a lot of repetition in these new “beginnings” though. As I continue to get older, the value of repetition grows for me. I suspect this is a function of being a slow learner or see-er.

For one big instance, in my daily, more than familiar prayers, of late I am “hearing” some phrases for what feels like the first time, or having a big “aha!” moment with some of them. Greetings to family and friends, pretty much the same words again this year (but so earnestly meant!). Of course we re-use the letters of our alphabet in numbers too large to consider!

So it is with social ministry reading—certainly the many reviews of the principles guiding social ministry, especially our citizenship responsibilities. There are layers and layers to their depth, so many realms for their application.

Some instances:

- God calls us to give special preference to persons who are poor (would anyone guess that from the way we are letting our Congress members decide? (This very day the 2<sup>nd</sup> chamber of our U.S. Congress decided to make many and big cuts in program that help poor people!! Watch beneficiaries of tax cut now.)
- We are ALL made in God's image (yet it is OK for some of US to torture others of us);

- All possess human dignity that must be respected;
- Business exists for the benefit of people and not the other way around; and
- It is unacceptable that hundreds of thousands of Kentuckians lack access to affordable health care, because access to healthcare is a fundamental human right.

And on around.

All this repetition-can-have-value thinking runs counter to the U.S. thirst for newness, variety, distraction, multi-tasking, “always more,” instant resolution of any question or difficulty, our throw-away tendencies.

Then there are life's or history's hard lessons to heed as we keep moving into the future. There is a lot of truth in the adage, “those who fail to learn history's lessons are doomed to repeat them.” (An aside: have we seriously looked at history's lessons from Rome, Germany, Russia?) Repetition again, along with the call to pay attention to the present.

There is repetition too in human relating—certainly in unconditional love that keeps repeating and enduring despite repeated failings.

If I am not alone in this experience of finally hearing and seeing, then there is great merit in going through the many repetitions, regardless of what each seems to yield at the time.

I guess one has to leave it to God's loving Providence that some don't have the opportunity to repeat so much so often for so long!

To repeat a familiar wish: All blessings in 2006, Everyone!

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