* Good Day, Karen O’Neill
* Grateful share reflections
* Healing, Love Acceptance with so many
* Praying for meaningful way to contribute something back
* Efforts today
* Theme: Bridge Over Troubled Water
* Christina –
  + Bridges handling tension with flexibility, adaptability
  + “I will lay me down” = bridge is a person
  + Finding unity in that tension through movement and connection with one another
  + Not judging, criticizing or talking about one another
  + That underlying longing for unity despite tension
  + Longing for Oneness to be connected back to God through that sense of unity & connection
* Christina – journey reflecting on our connection with one another—building external bridges
* KO – take on journey how to build internal bridges within ourselves
* **Build my own bridge**
  + **to reconnect and reclaim**
  + **most grim, grumpy, grizzly, awful, ugly, monstrous**
  + **innermost parts of myself**
  + **isolated on a deserted island somewhere lost deep down inside myself.**
  + **Find some steps to building each of our own internal bridges**from our scripture readings today.
* Invitation to close eyes
  + Favourite experience or place loved as a child (eg. Stream you caught fish, special room in your family home, special vacation spot you went to)
  + Breathe in all the joy, wonder, delight it brings you
  + What details fill in for you?
  + Smell? Wonderful smell of roast beef cooking as walk through the door
  + Hear? Children laughing; bullfrogs calling
  + See? Wondeful view
  + Feel? Ocean breeze or sunshine on your face
  + Taste? Favourite orange flavour of your favourite LifeSavers
  + Let all of your senses enjoy this moment
  + Breathe in deeply and exhale—
  + Relax into the experience fully
  + Take another breath/two and come back to the room, open eyes
* Memory as backdrop for today’s reflections
* LifeSaver candy: My favourite candy from childhood
  + Actually believed they saved your life
  + When I was 3 ½, my Mom was is in the hospital.
  + Insisted Dad stop in store and buy LifeSavers
  + I forced my Mom to have one and Voila!
  + PERHAPS, one of these LifeSavers might help us find/save a lost part of ourselves today
  + Take one and pass along
* My Favourite Place: my uncle’s cottage
  + Not say too much—will ask you to share what traits/characteristics at end of reflections
  + What traits might I have kept hidden under towel or buried deep within me
  + Number of photos to give ideas

PROBLEM IN THE WORLD:

* As children, who we are & special uniqueness wide open, running through us & out of us as gift to any who come in contact with us.
* As we grow more, learn new behaviours and ways to be in the world.
  + We learn how to ride a bike, drive a car, fall in love for the first time, we try something that is a bit dangerous, go on adventure
  + We try new experiences which then become part of the repertoire of who we are…These are wonderful new traits, characteristics, things we learn about ourselves.
* As we get older, experience hurt, judgement, traumas & decide not going to experience, be around that kind of pain again
* As make choices, we close down, separate from, abandon parts of ourselves
  + What we say goodbye to are God-given parts of selves
* But what has happened to those parts we close down, that we left behind? Where do they go? Did we really successfully get rid of them? Or do they somehow come out, crying to be heard in other ways.

PROBLEM IN THE TEXT:

* Matthew 7: We are told not to judge others or we will be judged.
  + Choose to close off part of ourselves, isn’t that in fact what we are doing?
  + Judging that one part of us is not valuable or is too awful/painful/monstrous to look at? We decide and judge that this is something that must be removed from the rest of me.
* Judged and removed part of ourselves in someone else, it makes us wince/lash out/behave judgementally.
  + not that we are cold and uncaring.
  + simply we have judged ourselves or that part of ourselves which we have shut down
  + —the pain, abandonment, trauma too much to bear so we react negatively.
* Matthew 7 says that how we judge others will not only come back to us, it will also come back in the same way we have done it to others.

EXAMPLE FROM MY LIFE:

* Wonderful, wacky, beautiful, close friendships over my life.
  + I had a very special friend during my high school years. She was my best friend and we did everything together.
  + At the end of my marriage and simultanious sudden death of my mother, another beautiful friend --shared our deepest fears, our greatest passions and our painful losses.
  + 2 ½ years ago, grieving the death of a young member of my extended family, a dear friend who helped me get out of my grief; we travelled to exotic parts of the world together sharing many highs and lows.
* no longer continue to interact with me.
  + Initially, I had no idea what I had done to cause such an extreme reaction.
  + tried to reengage with them over many months and years—phone calls, emails, texts, invitations to parties—no response.
  + I believed I had absolved myself of any responsibility. Or had I?
* Years later, I realized that there common element in all of these relationships. Me!
* I wondered..do I somehow abandon other people I am close to when I feel threatened in some way?
* It was painful to consider this. With slow steps, I began to realize that yes, I had behaved similarly. Perhaps, I was physically there but I had abandoned them emotionally, mentally, psychologically.
* Like Matthew, I was looking at the speck of sawdust in my brother’s eye while paying no attention to the plank in my own eye.
* Matthew says take the plank out of my own eye first…and then I will see clearly to remove the speck from my brother’s eye.

GREAT! I have

* **STEP 1 to BUILDING MY OWN BRIDGE TO RECONNECT AND RECLAIM THE LOST INNERMOST PARTS OF ME:**

1. **STEP 1:** **WORK ON MYSELF FIRST**

* How on earth am I supposed to take out the plank from my own eye?

GRACE IN THE TEXT:

* Psalm 103: gives me **STEP 2**:
* “Praise the Lord, O my Soul; ***ALL MY INMOST BEING***, praise his holy name…He forgives all my sins, heals all of my diseases, redeems me from my pit, gives me love and compassion ***so that my youth is renewed like an eagle’s***”
* “No Matter What” – we have two characters “Large” and “Small”.
  + Book for adults.
  + Large = Adult Selves; Small = abandoned Child Selves. Or perhaps,
  + Large is God and Small is Us.
  + The point remains that no matter how **grim, grumpy, grizzly, awful, ugly, or monstrous** we are, we are loved
* God loves all parts of me including all of my innermost reviled, painful, unworthy bits that I gave up as a child.
* God loves and restores me from the depths of my own pit where I have put every abandoned, judged part of me that I don’t like.
* God gives me love, compassion and courage to look more closely at myself.

Okay, **STEP 1 & 2 to BUILDING MY OWN BRIDGE TO RECONNECT AND RECLAIM THE LOST INNERMOST PARTS OF ME:**

**STEP 1:**

* **WORK ON MYSELF FIRST**

**STEP 2:**

* **GOD LOVES ALL OF ME INCLUDING MY INNERMOST GRIM, GRUMPY, GRIZZLY, AWFUL, UGLY, MONSTROUS PARTS.**
* **GOD SHOWS ME THE WAY: HOW TO LOVE & HAVE COMPASSION FOR MYSELF, HOW TO FORGIVE MYSELF, HOW TO HEAL MY DIS-EASED PARTS OF MYSELF, AND HOW TO REDEEM MYSELF FROM MY OWN PIT.**
* **SO I AM RENEWED LIKE A CHILD—FREE TO FLY AND SOAR AS I AM DIVINELY CREATED TO BE.**
* feel safer, more loved, braver than ever before to consider my abandoning behaviour and harm I have caused those I love.

1st book of Corinthians,

I find..**STEP 3:**

* Our Divine nature is made up of many parts.
* **All of my parts are valuable, Divine and in God’s image..even the bits that I find too painful to look at.**
* I pray for God’s assistance to look at my behaviour so I can be healed and not lose friends anymore.
* With God’s love and grace, I am building a bridge to that buried, grim, grumpy, monstrous part of myself that I left behind.
* What I see is that buried part of me who wanted desperately to be seen and acknowledged because I had been emotionally, psyschologically abandoned as a child.
* As a result, the Small me decided and was determined to always be physically there for my siblings and others who need me.
* In doing this, I ignore the part of me that wants and needs to be seen, told I am valuable.
* As a result, because I could not see my own pain around being abandoned, when my own adult relationships became too complex, difficult, I behaved in abandoning ways like had been done with me.
* I did not know what to do, or how to show love and compassion to someone who desperately wanted to be “seen” and valued in the world.
* I had abandoned this in myself and in doing so judged that these parts of me were not valuable, God-given and Divine.
* I was saying to those parts of me “I do not need you.”— I can get on just fine without this part of me. It is awful, selfish, bad to have a need to be seen anyway.
* I was just like the eye saying to the hand “I don’t need you” or the head saying to the feet “I don’t need you.”
* “But in fact, God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.”

Now I have three steps **to BUILDING MY OWN BRIDGE TO RECONNECT AND RECLAIM THE LOST INNERMOST PARTS OF ME:**

**STEP 1:**

* **WORK ON MYSELF FIRST**

**STEP 2:**

* **GOD LOVES ALL OF ME INCLUDING MY INNERMOST GRIM, GRUMPY, GRIZZLY, AWFUL, UGLY, MONSTROUS PARTS.**
* **GOD SHOWS ME THE WAY: HOW TO LOVE & HAVE COMPASSION FOR MYSELF, HOW TO FORGIVE MYSELF, HOW TO HEAL MY DIS-EASED PARTS OF MYSELF, AND HOW TO REDEEM MYSELF FROM MY OWN PIT.**
* **SO I AM RENEWED LIKE A CHILD—FREE TO FLY AND SOAR AS I AM DIVINELY CREATED TO BE.**

**STEP 3:**

* **ALL OF MY PARTS ARE VALUABLE, DIVINE AND IN GOD’S IMAGE..EVEN THE BITS THAT I FIND TOO PAINFUL TO LOOK AT.**

GRACE IN THE WORLD:

1st book of Corinthians,

I find..**STEP 4:**

* We are told God has made those parts of the body that seem to be **weaker to be INDISPENSIBLE**—**ESSENTIAL, NOT SUBJECT TO BEING SET ASIDE OR NEGLECTED**
* “And the parts that we think **are less honourable we treat with special honour”**
* “**Greater honour to the parts that lack it** so there is no division in the body. Every part has equal regard and wellbeing for the other parts.
* IF one part suffers, every part suffers.
* “IF one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it”.

**STEP 4: MY MOST PAINFUL CHILDHOOD WOUNDS ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE WHOLE OF WHO I AM AS A CHILD OF GOD. TO RECLAIM THAT PART OF ME IS TO RECLAIM THE FULLNESS OF GOD/DIVINE WITHIN ME.**

* It is only here that I can take a broken part of myself that is also God, love that part, accept that part, forgive that part, reclaim that part and welcome it back with the rest of my body.
* In doing so, I give special honour to that part of me that has been gone for so long, rejoicing that this Divine part of me has returned to the whole of me.
* I am rejoicing as God’s child made in his image. I am rejoicing at feeling loved, accepted and forgiven for having abandoned myself.
* I am rejoicing at the shift in my relationships that are engaging in healthy communication and deeper love and compassion healing abandonment from within myself as well as outside myself.

TA DA! –

**I Have 5 steps:**

* **BUILD MY OWN BRIDGE TO RECONNECT AND RECLAIM THE LOST INNERMOST PARTS OF ME**
* **IN ORDER TO BE FREE, SOAR LIKE AN EAGLE AND SHINE IN GOD’S IMAGE LIKE ALL CHILDREN DO:**

**STEP 1:**

* **WORK ON MYSELF FIRST**

**STEP 2:**

* **GOD LOVES ALL OF ME INCLUDING MY INNERMOST GRIM, GRUMPY, GRIZZLY, AWFUL, UGLY, MONSTROUS PARTS.**
* **GOD SHOWS ME THE WAY: HOW TO LOVE & HAVE COMPASSION FOR MYSELF, HOW TO FORGIVE MYSELF, HOW TO HEAL MY DIS-EASED PARTS OF MYSELF, AND HOW TO REDEEM MYSELF FROM MY OWN PIT.**
* **SO I AM RENEWED LIKE A CHILD—FREE TO FLY AND SOAR AS I AM DIVINELY CREATED TO BE.**

**STEP 3:**

* **ALL OF MY PARTS ARE VALUABLE, DIVINE AND IN GOD’S IMAGE..EVEN THE BITS THAT I FIND TOO PAINFUL TO LOOK AT.**

**STEP 4:**

* **MY MOST PAINFUL CHILDHOOD WOUNDS ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE WHOLE OF WHO I AM AS A CHILD OF GOD. TO RECLAIM THAT PART OF ME IS TO RECLAIM THE FULLNESS OF GOD/DIVINE WITHIN ME.**

**STEP 5:**

* **BY BECOMING WHOLE AND MORE CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH OUR GODLINESS, WE SHINE THE BRIGHTEST, MOST AUTHENTIC VERSION OF OURSELVES. WE THEN OFFER THAT AS OUR GREATEST GIFT TO THE WORLD, PERMISSION FOR OTHERS TO BUILD THEIR OWN BRIDGES TO RECLAIM MORE OF THEIR OWN DIVINE/GOD NATURES.**

PHOTOS: What childhood characteristics?

* Do you recognize any of those traits in yourself?
* Do you bring those beautiful parts of yourself out into how you are with yourself and with others?
* If not, how could you build a bridge to reconnect and reclaim the most beautiful and honoured innermost parts of yourself made in God’s Image.
* So that you might shine as the Bright God-given star you are created to be, teaching as you go how others can be the same.

In the words of Simon and Garfunkel from Bridge Over Troubled Water…

“Sail on, Silver girl (boy).

Sail on by.

Your time has come to shine.

All your dreams are on their way.

See how YOU shine.”