

An Invitation to Wisdom and Grace

Week 1—ORDER: Overview, Models and Paradigms, Belovedness,
Stepping out in courage

Living along the Arc of Life

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Saint Mark's Cathedral

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Presuppositions for this series

- We were created to live in union with God (Rohr: Divine Love Affair)
- Love is the Source and Goal (Ground of all Being)
 - Faith is the slow process of getting there
 - Hope is the willingness to move forward without resolution or closure
- We need all three (Love, Faith, Hope) to make the arduous journey
- Even when we feel the absence of God, we still are in the “womb of the incarnation”—preparing to be born into what’s next.
- In the fullness of time, we open/yield into union with God (mystery)—nothing and no one is irretrievably lost!

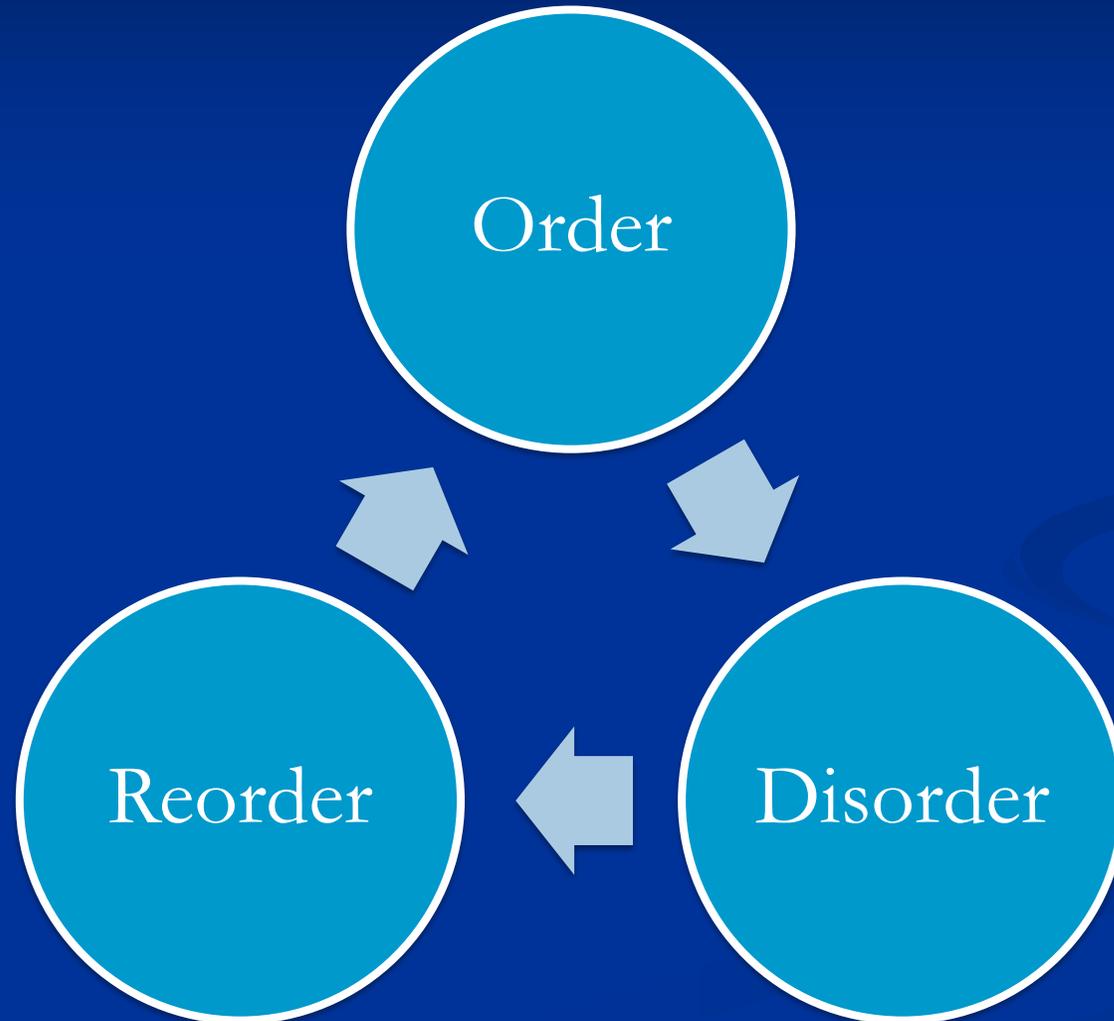
Be gentle with yourself

Overview of the Series

- March 13—ORDER: Overview, Models and Paradigms, Belovedness, Stepping out in courage
- March 20—DISORDER: Dark Night of the Soul: Wilderness Experience as a Challenge and Gift, Different kinds of darkness
- March 27—REORDER: A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life in a Wounded World

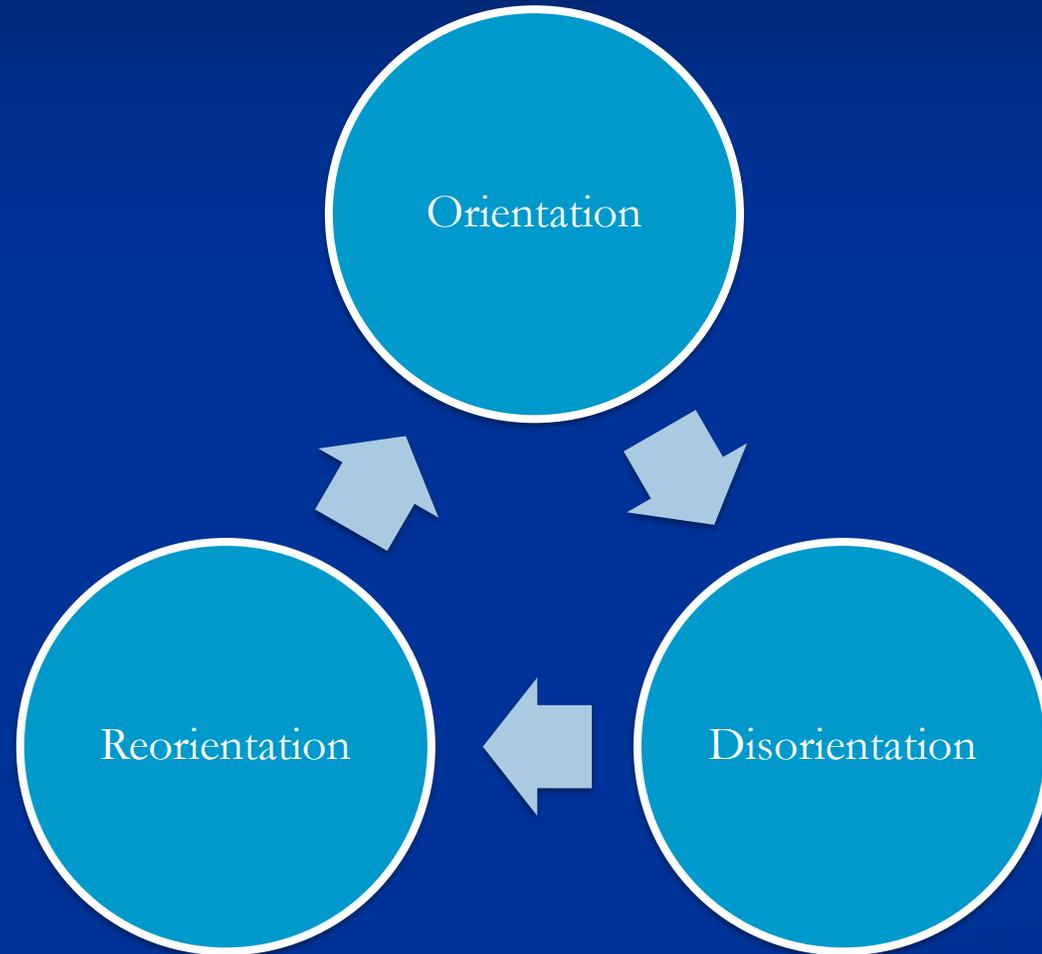
Didactic material, sharing, reflections, conversations

Models (heuristic guides, not straightjackets)



- Applied by Richard Rohr for spiritual journey
- Adapted from Walter Brueggemann
- Applies not just to Faith Development, but also Scripture, Politics, and Systems

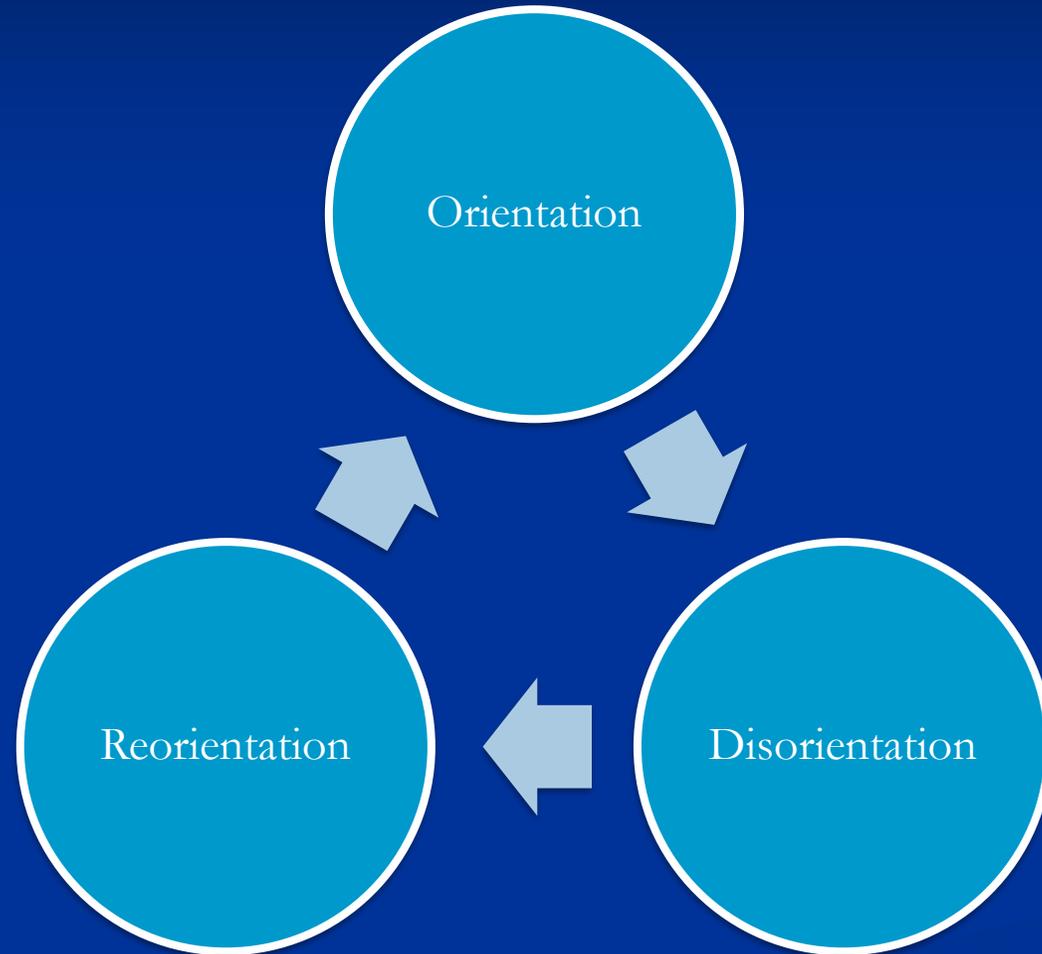
Brueggemann's Spirituality of the Scriptures



Old Testament Rhythm

- Torah: identity through law, certitude, ritual, chosenness
- Prophets: failures of identity and resulting struggles
- Wisdom: capacity to hold mystery and paradox as life-giving

Brueggemann's Spirituality of the Scriptures

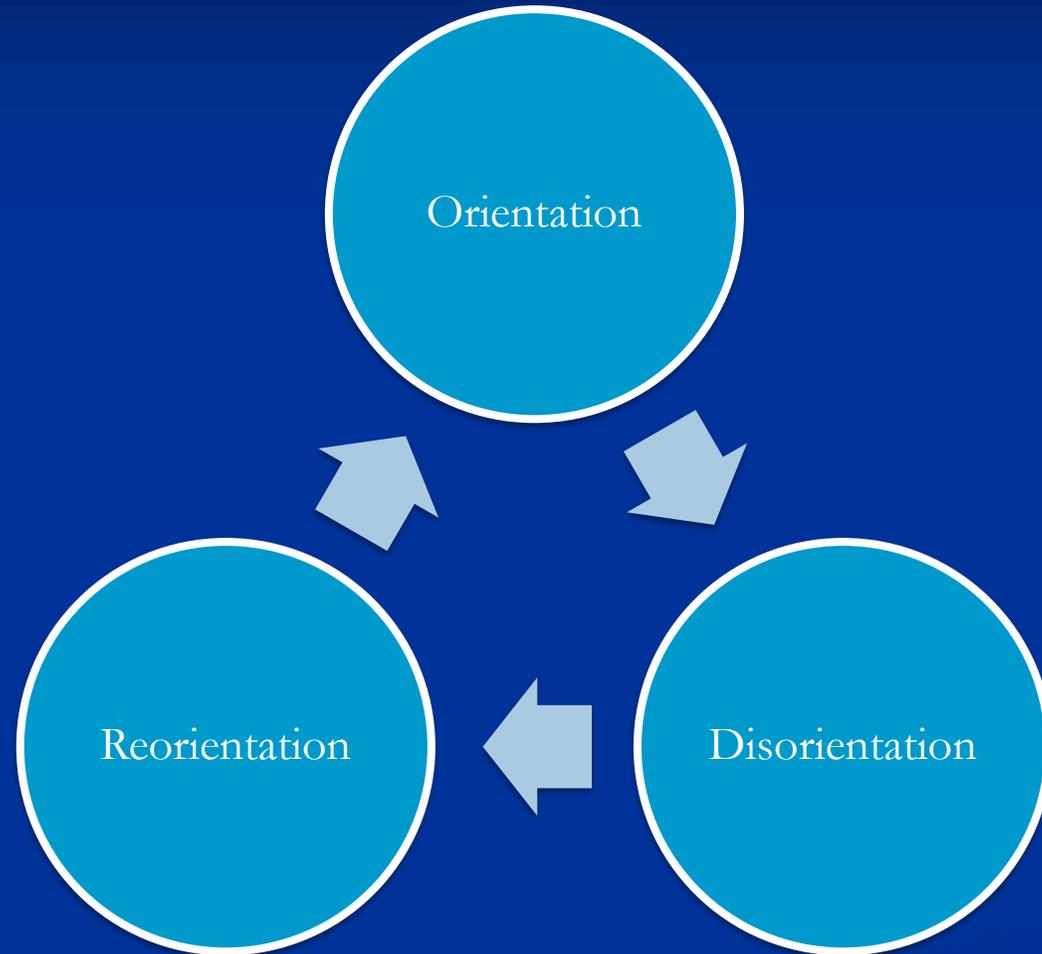


New Testament Rhythm

Passion Narrative

- Palm Sunday entry as king
- Gethsemane to Golgotha
- Empty Tomb and post-resurrection appearances

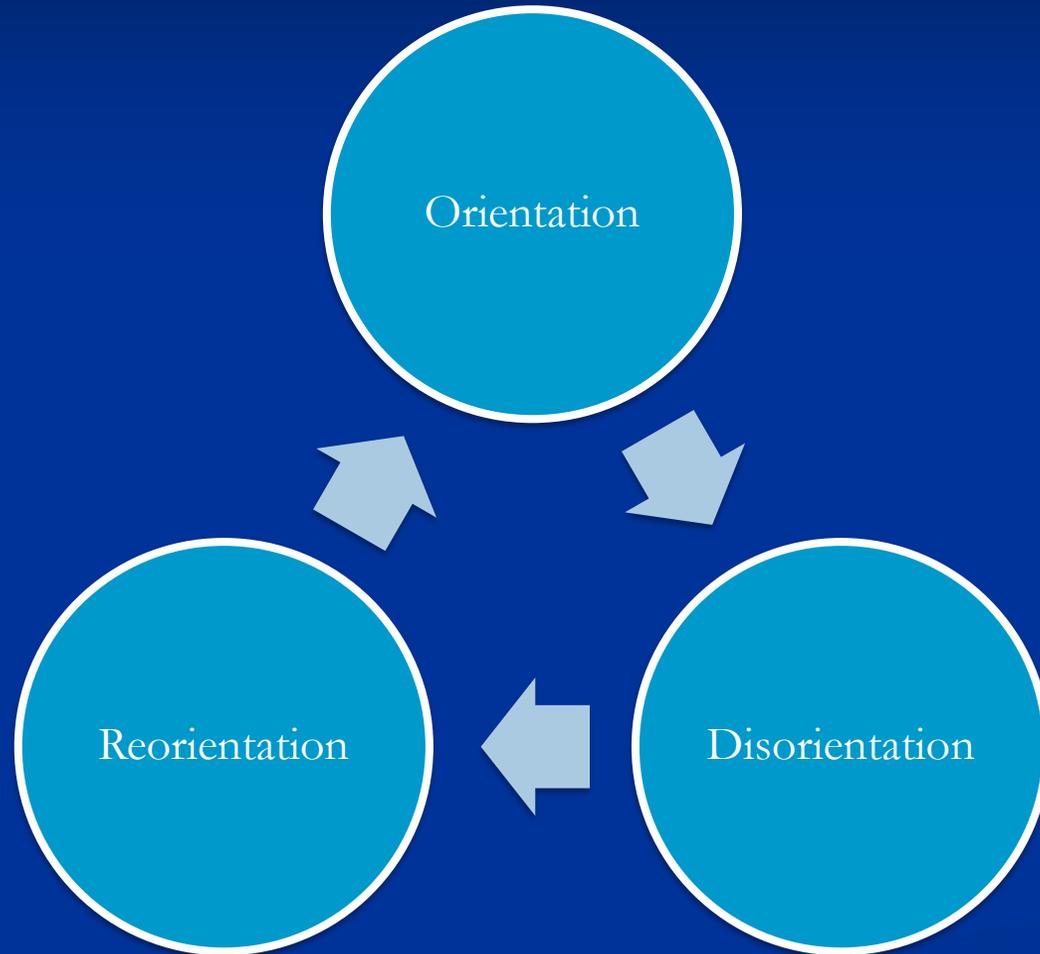
Exemplified in the Person of Jesus



Philippians 2:5-11

“Though he was in the form of God...He emptied himself (kenosis)...Therefore, God has highly exalted him (raised him up).”

Undergirds our Sacramental Identity



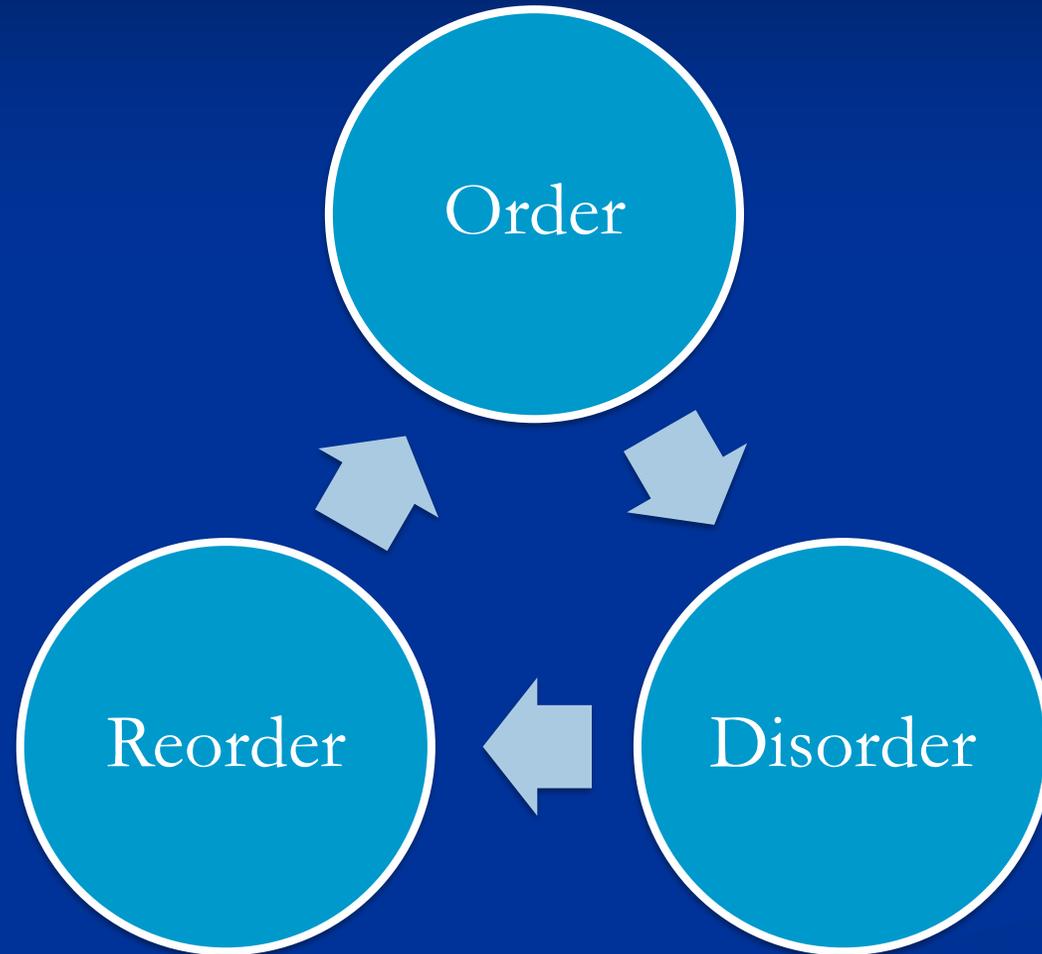
Baptism (Romans 6:4)

“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death...that as Christ was raised from the dead...we too might walk in newness of life.”

Eucharist

- God created the world as good
- We lost our way and corrupted it
- Christ helps in redemptive love to set it right again (foretaste)

Political Orientation



Conservatives often get trapped in first stage:

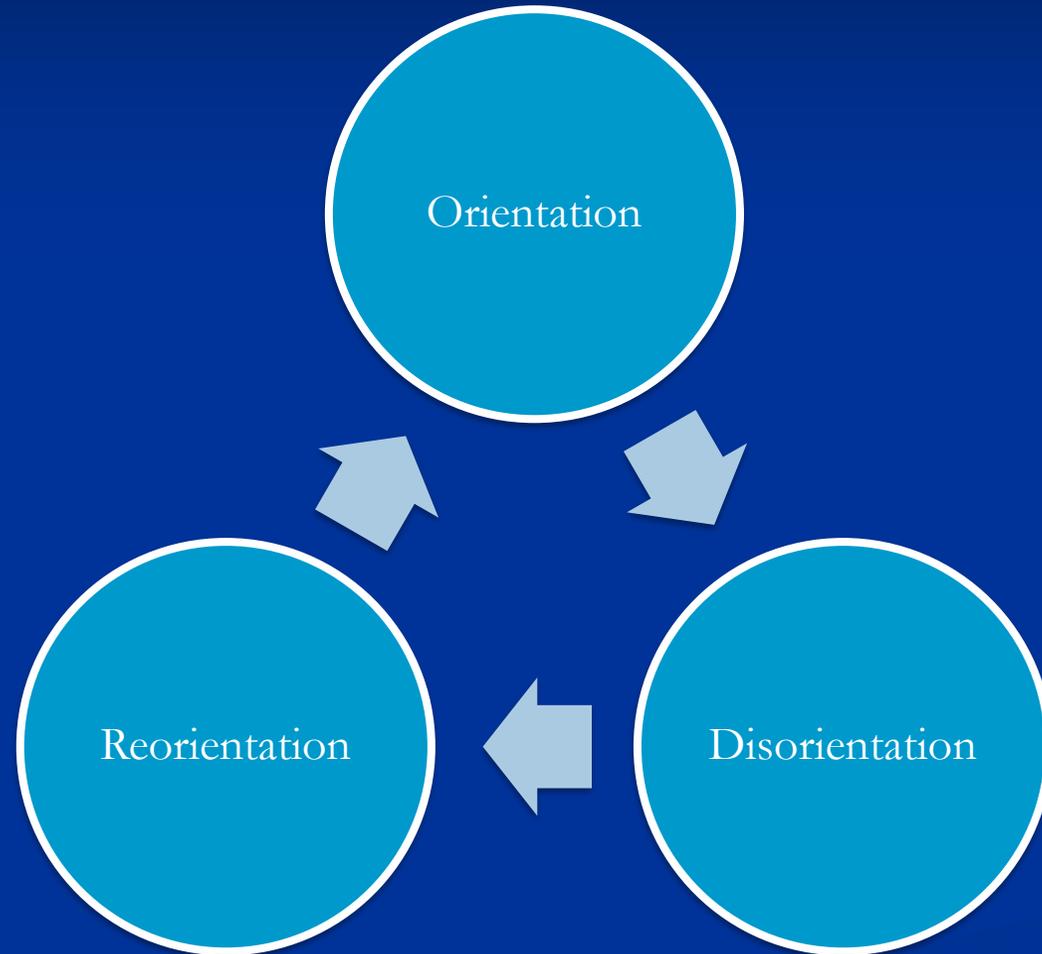
- Rule-oriented, rigidity, maintain status quo because it makes sense

Progressives often get trapped in second stage:

- The world is not right because of “those” people
- Work focuses on the disorientation while the

Reorientation may remain invisible (paradigm shift)

Epic Poetry and Hero Myths (Jos. Campbell)



Two Halves of Life

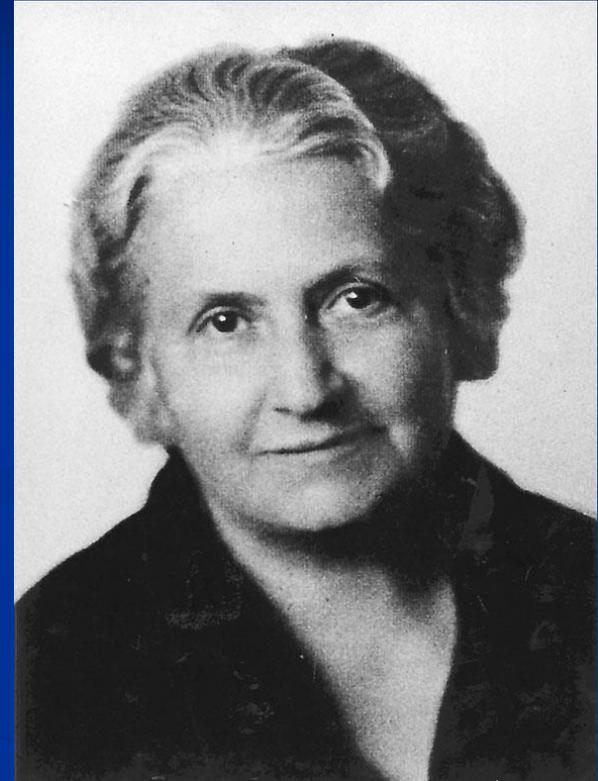
- First Half of Life: identity through affiliation, certitude (or lack of uncertainty), specialness, dualistic thinking to project problems away from self, tribal, narcissistic
- Second Half of Life: capacity for self-reflection, doubt, struggling with loss, failure or ambiguity, capacity to see all as good and bad (non-dual, non-tribal)
- Division is NOT age-specific, not well-demarcated, not unidirectional...but Disorder is the portal from to the other

Affiliations

- What are some ways we claim identity through affiliation?

Container for Belovedness

- Maria Montessori: healthy parenting provides safety and security for child to discover her belovedness simply by the parental mirroring of that love
- No parent does it perfectly
- Some parents do it poorly or not at all (i.e., Not all children are provided this container)
- There can be other pathways into a sense of belovedness



Tandem Conversation

- When were you first aware of your being loved (beloved)?
- Can you think of a time you doubted your belovedness?

Limitations/Dangers inherent in the Model

- Postmodern experience: the meta-narratives aren't there to provide answers in the first half of life
- There is no direct route from Order to Reorder (must go through Disorder experience)
- Some have such low sense of self that the wilderness experience can be trigger to pathology (different kinds of darkness)
- Religion has often been used as abusive tool of subjugation (more next week)

Kenosis and Sacrifice (Wilderness Work?)

- Literally, kenosis is “self-emptying” of one’s own will to become receptive to the will of God (for a purpose)—requires disordering experience...
- Christology: kenosis of JC as divine to become human
- Sacrifice: literally, “sacred act”—in the action something holy happens (not always suffering only, can be source of joy)
- Kenosis requires humility (not self-deprecation, but yielding to the Spirit’s moving in your life—epiclesis)
- Kenosis requires vulnerability (you cannot control what happens)

Writing Exercise

- Write one paragraph about your experience of moving from first half of life to second half of life. What was the “disorder” that prompted it?

Next Week

- Dark Night of the Soul:

Wilderness Experience as a Challenge and Gift (Disorder)

Different Types of Darkness

Homework:

1. Reflect and journal on what struck you in tonight's class
2. Give thought to the affiliative and wilderness experiences you've had in your life.

Selected Bibliography

- Gerald May, *The Dark Night of the Soul: A Psychiatrist Explores the Connection between Darkness and Spiritual Growth*
- Walter Brueggemann, *Spirituality of the Psalms*
- Richard Rohr, *Immortal Diamond*
- Kathryn Tanner, *Economy of Grace*
- Parker Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life in a Wounded World*
- *Writings of the Mystics: John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, Julian*

Questions,
Comments,
Conversation