

## Week 2 Homework:



# Turning Away/Turning Toward

Sometimes when we say the Apostles' Creed in worship, we start with the renunciation:

*Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil and all his empty promises? I do.*

We state clearly that we reject evil in order to make room for our affirmation of God; we turn away from evil so that we can turn toward God. They are two sides of one action. In the ancient church, this was symbolized in worship by a literal turning: a candidate for baptism faced the west and the setting sun to renounce all the forces of darkness, then turned toward the east and the rising sun, the light of the Son of God, and professed their faith in God.

This turning away from evil in order to turn toward God is mirrored by John's admonition that the "ax is lying at the root of the trees." Those things in our lives that do not help us bear good fruit need to be cut away in order to foster new life just as dead limbs need to be trimmed to help the overall health of the tree.

This week, contemplate what in your life you need to turn away from in order to turn back toward God. What needs to be removed in order for you to bear good fruit? Spend time this week creating a list of what you will turn from in order to turn toward God.

You may use the following confession through the week:

### **Prayer of Brokenness/Confession**

*I confess, O God, that I have not kept awake, that I have not been looking for signs of Your return. Instead, I have been looking at the broken world around me and wondering how it will get fixed. Sometimes forgetting that the brokenness also resides in me. Forgive us. Help me to see what I must turn from in order to turn back to You. Remind me You are the Savior of the World, and that we need to work together to prepare Your way, to build Your beloved community here, now, for others as well as for ourselves. In the name of the One who has come and is returning, I pray. Amen.*

### **Blessing/Assurance of Pardon**

*Every moment we turn back, God is there, ready to receive us. Every moment we work to build God's beloved community is not in vain. God has need for all of us; God has need for you. Know that you are forgiven and loved, and very much needed in this kingdom-building work. Come, join your hearts, and use your gifts for the reign of God here on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.*

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Pardon (slightly adapted) written by Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell, <http://rev-o-lution.org>