

From Interrupted to Disrupted

I am comforted by the familiar, and I'm increasingly nostalgic as I grow older. Photographs, books, and mementos sustain a sense of connection to family, friends, faith, and curiosities. Quotidian patterns in unchanged physical surroundings keep my anxieties at bay.

Javier and I have been discussing the purchase of a new home for several years. My nervousness over moving, however, hindered me from progressing beyond a conversation. That changed over the Christmas holidays when we decided it was time to move forward and put our house on the market. Spring break proved to be the ideal time to start this new adventure. I had nine days to go through every drawer, closet, and bookshelf with intention, and I took my time making important decisions: What would go into storage? What should be donated? What would be discarded? We worked tirelessly to get our house ready for potential buyers, winnowing down to bare necessities and depersonalizing every room and space.

On the day of our finishing touches for the realtor's photographer, local officials issued stay at home orders. Initial disappointment over what I thought to be a slight interruption to our plan turned into a realization that my familiar surroundings and routines have been disrupted. We aren't putting our house on the market for the foreseeable future, and I miss the photographs, books, and mementos that once surrounded me on nightstands, walls, and cabinets. I've been tempted to retrieve a few personal treasures from the storage unit. Instead, I think I will sit with the discomfort and disruption.

My personal experience feels insignificant as I process the loss of life and livelihoods for so many friends and neighbors in our city and across the globe. I am frustrated by a sense of helplessness at the inability to respond in ways other than keeping my distance. Yet, I know that as we each hunker down in our homes, we are taking care of ourselves and one another.

As I reflect from my makeshift home office in a room I've never used, I wonder: What new meanings and connections might emerge as I shed old patterns and familiar territory? What new memories and ways of being could develop if I open myself to possibilities?

As followers of Jesus, how might we understand the sacred stories in new and creative ways to bring meaning to our current situation? Using the lens of disruption, can we listen and learn from Jesus' teachings to sustain more loving relationships and strive for justice?

- Raymond Stubblefield