A while ago, I shared with you one of the newest words that was added to the Oxford dictionary. Do you remember what it was? The word was “nomophobia”, remember? How many of you remember what that means? Nomo-phobia simply means “the fear of not having your mobile devices”. Get it? No-Mo?

For some of us, nomo-phobia might be the worst fear – the feeling of not being connected with the rest of the world virtually through social media, telephone or text…etc.

Today, I want to share with you another similar word. It’s called “mono-phobia”. Can you guess that that mean? Anyone? The prefix “Mono”, as you know, means “one” or “solo” or “alone”, and phobia obviously means the “Fear of”. So mono-phobia simply means “the fear of being alone”. Human beings are created to be in community with one another and with God. We are not meant to be alone!

Recently there was a social experiment that was conducted on a group of teenage girls. They were challenged to put away their cell phones with no social media, no on-line games, chats, texting or phone calls for the entire week. Yes, they actually were forced to interact and talk to another human, face-to-face for the entire week! Scary thought, isn’t it? Many thought the world was coming to an end! However, surprisingly by the end of the week, most of these teenagers found that they came to appreciate one another more, by actually listening, talking and understanding the other parties, even though they were not connected with their virtual communities. They found that they could be themselves once again without having to be socially fit in or influenced by their peers.

As Rev. Grace Bowen share with us last week regarding the meaning and the significance of Trinity on Trinity Sunday, we come to see how the unity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit work in “communion” with one another…in “community”, or in perfect harmony. They are interdependent and inseparable with one another. They all know what one another are doing, at any given time and any given place. There’s a great deal of collaboration and synchronization with one another. One knows the work of the other and in communication with one another. Kind of like what the people experienced on the day of Pentecost, when they understood one other, despite being uniquely different and speaking in different tongues.

In the same way, we human are also being called and strive to live in communion with one another and with God. No matter how old one may be, whether one is an introvert or an extrovert, at the end we still find ourselves interdependent of one another.

In the Old Testament story today, we read about the prophet Elijah who was also feeling lonely and being abandoned by his people. The people had failed to honor God with their allegiance. They had disobeyed God and worshipped foreign gods, including the King and the Queen.

Elijah was in exile, running for his dear life, after he had prophesied against and killing all of the false prophets who worked for the king Ahab and the queen Jezebel. Elijah was exhausted not only physically, but emotionally and spiritually as well. Elijah found himself praying to God to end his whole misery right there and then.

 Elijah was on the run, fleeing from Queen Jezebel’s army into the countryside and came upon this place pleading to God that he might simply die. He sent his servants away and proceeded to travel alone through the desert…more like on a suicide mission. *“Take me, O LORD, just take me. Do whatever you need to do, just get me out of this misery. Life is not worth living anymore. I’ve done ALL that I can. I’ve been faithful to you all my life. The people have turned against me and have disobeyed you and your commandments”* as Elijah lamented.

 Despite Elijah’s plead, God did not grant his wish. But instead, God sent an angel to Elijah to attend to his needs by offering him a new life and a renewed mission. As one door closed, another door opened. God provided him a cave for shelter and with food to eat and water to drink over the next 40 days and 40 nights. As God led Elijah to the top of the mountain, Elijah thought that God was coming before him.

 There was a great wind, with thunder and lightning, trembling earthquakes and a great fire, but the LORD was not there. Then came a great sheer of silence. It was then when the LORD revealed His presence before Elijah through a still small voice, “*What are you doing here, Elijah?”*

 Elijah made his appeal once again before the LORD to take his life now*. “Why don’t you just take my life away right now, LORD? I really don’t want to go back to my people. The people don’t deserve a second chance. They’ll just stone me to death and I’m the only prophet left.”* Then the LORD said to Elijah, but that’s exactly why I want you to go back. Go Back! Elijah! Go Back! Go back to my people and continue to proclaim the WORD of repentance and hope to my people. Your mission is not over just yet, Elijah. I still got unfinished business for you to take care of. No one said this was going to be easy when one answers God’s call. But know that **YOU are NEVER alone no matter what!**

 How many of us have had similar experience as Elijah’s, when we have our backs are against the wall, when we are tired of doing all that we can, just to stay afloat above the water, but only to be met with empty hopes and disappointments, feeling betrayed and abandoned by others. Some of us might want to surrender and throw in the towels, as they say. We want to isolate ourselves from others, and from God. The Lord has become foreign to us in our mind and in our hearts.

 But as we witnessed throughout history, time after time, the LORD reassures us that *WE ARE NEVER ALONE*. **If God has not abandoned us, then how can we abandon God or God’s people.** God’s mission continues with us as Christ’s ambassadors and witnesses[[1]](#footnote-1) The Holy Spirit will go before us AND stays with us wherever we go. As Jesus said, *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”*[[2]](#footnote-2) God promises to remain faithful to His own people until the very end.

 Through our story today, Elijah reminds us that **we should never underestimate what God has planned and installed for us.** God seeks our genuine and harmonious relationships with him, as in our relationships with others. Instead of taking matters into our own hands, we shall place our trust in God. As Proverbs 3 reminds us that we ought to “*trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”[[3]](#footnote-3)*

 As Elijah arrived at Mount Horeb, he thought that he had made his final journey in life and that God was going to take him up to Heaven as He did with Moses. But God turned around and sent Elijah back. *“Go, return on your way to Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as new king over Aram.” [[4]](#footnote-4)* **God was not done with Elijah just yet!**

 In the same way, God’s mission for us is not over just yet, as this church enters its 120th years of mission here in South Brooklyn. God continues to breathe new breath within us. We find ourselves hearing, “Go back, Elijah….Go back! Go back to your mission frontier and to your people whom I have sent you.” The Spirit will go before us and lead us. You are NOT alone!

 Through our baptism in Christ, we are made One-in-Christ and on the same God’s mission together. No one shall be going solo or doing this alone, for God equips us and uses us for God’s purpose and glory. For *there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if we belong to Christ, then we are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to God’s promise.[[5]](#footnote-5)*

 Friends, God is not through with us just yet and has greater plan installed in our future. We may or may not see it through our eyes. During this post-Pentecostal season, God is inviting us to cultivate and rekindle our relationships once again among ourselves and more importantly with God. We ask ourselves, where might God fit in when a community is growing tired and weary and in need of reassurance of new hope and life? What part are you willing to take part of in God’s plan for the people?

 May we seek God’s kingdom first and above all things. Listen to what God may have to say to us, during times of uncertainties, as we seek clarity and discernment of our hearts. Discern wisely and obediently through our callings, both individually and corporately as a body of Christ. Look for signs of God’s happening all around us and through us. As the Psalmist declares, “*Be still, and know that I am God![[6]](#footnote-6) Be still and know that I am! Be still and know! Be still!”*

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

1. *II Corinthians 5:20* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Matthew 24:35* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Proverbs 3:5-6* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *I King 19:15* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Galatians 3:28-29* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Psalm 46:10* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)