

*The images of the creation and pouring of wine symbolize the way Jesus lived his life.
He teaches us that we live most fully when we pour ourselves out into the work of the world.*

There is a flyer available in the west entrance on the table.

It lists the ten most spiritually relevant movies of 2009 -
according to a website I look at from time to time.

Have you seen the list?

Can you guess some of the movies?

Avatar begins with an ex-marine who had lost the use of his legs.

And through a bizarre set of events he is able to
live for periods of time through the body
of a human-like being on another planet.

In doing this he is able to experience
all these energetic connections that exist in nature
but which are often scarcely noticed in our own commercially driven culture.

Precious – begins with a degraded and abused teenage girl who is able to
survive and thrive because of an indomitable spirit
and the concern of an inspiring teacher.

Julie & Julia – begins with two women looking for their dreams.

It is about creativity and following a dream –
and really about enthusiasm as a spiritual practice.



These are just a few – but it gives us an idea of stories
that seem to carry significance and meaning.

Avatar has got me thinking about the energy of the universe –
in plants – between people –and what is there is this marvelous creation
that we scarcely see.

It even had me thinking a little about incarnation -
God – the divine – embodied in human form in Jesus -
and I believe God is embodied in all of us.
But in Jesus God coming to live and often suffer in a human experience -
pouring out his life for us.

The creator of the movie may not have had that in mind at all -
but I thought of it.

Because of *Precious*, I hope I will pay more attention
to any opportunity to be a role model for children and adolescents
who have been abused -
or whose lives have been deprived of love and care.
In my life - I want to pour myself out in a good and healthy way -
to children in need – or the world's need – as this teacher did.

And on a lighter note – because of *Julie and Julia*
I think of a stick of butter – and remember the enthusiasm
and the discipline of learning to cook and enjoy the taste of food.
Too often we lose the enthusiasm and vitality of life.

Movies do have the capacity to flow into our lives
and change the way we see some things.



There was movie several years ago that changed the way
many of us thought about something we do almost every day.

Once you saw this movie -
there was no way you could perform this daily rite the same way.

The movie was *Psycho* (1960).

The everyday activity was taking a shower.

How many of you have seen this Alfred Hitchcock classic?

Then you know. You hear that awful – screechy music.

You feel the helplessness and horror of being cocooned in rushing warm water.

You shiver at the coming of that unexpected life - extinguishing knife.

You never see any violence.

The movie is so scary because everything
is masterfully implied by signs and images.

Alfred Hitchcock transformed the way we watch movies – you know.

Before *Psycho* – movie theatres ran films on a “loop,”
repeating the movie over and over without a break.

We could go in whenever we wanted to see a movie.

We didn’t need to pay all that much attention to the starting and ending time.

You would just watch for the signs – or remember the dialogue -
and get up and leave when you started to see the same things again.

“Time to go – this is where we came in.”

This is where that phrase came from.

Hitchcock didn't want audiences to find out the identity of his *Psycho* until they had progressed – step-by-step – through the tension that was building terror in those watching.

So Alfred Hitchcock forced all theatres playing his movie to have set times when the film started. And when it is over – everyone leaves - until the next showing begins. "This is where we came in" became obsolete.

Defining the "beginning" was something Alfred Hitchcock did for movies.



John's gospel was defining the "beginnings" for Jesus' ministry - not his life – but his ministry. John's gospel gives us those beginning words – beginning scenes.

As far as we know this was Jesus' first public expression. And it happened at a wedding party in Cana.

A joyous event – we might say the first event of a new era. This is where we come in on this ministry of Jesus – this life of Jesus as being different than the rest of us.

The first thing he does is make wine and pour it out for the joy of the celebration.

Remember – he will again pour out wine near the end of his life – the Last Supper.

I never thought about that until this week.

But - he did pour out his life for others.
And wine – of course – must be poured out or it becomes stale.
Even the best wine will eventually turn to vinegar -
sour and worthless – completely unpalatable.



The symbols are rich.
This is my body – broken for you.
This is my blood poured out for you.
What are we to learn in these words?

A life that is not poured out for others -
a life that is not given in service and love to others -
is a life lived for self alone.

That life sours.
You don't stockpile life for yourself.

"Hoarding" is a kind of stockpiling of things.
And "hoarding" is now recognized as a mental disorder.
Hoarders cannot bring themselves to get rid of anything
once it comes into their orbit.
Their identity is defined by the growing stacks of stuff that fills their homes.

And this is the important part:
The fuller their space becomes – the emptier their lives grow.
Instead of relationships – a career – a home – a purpose -
hoarders have piles and piles of trash.

Healthy people don't hoard.
I think there is something about life that is to be poured out.
So something new can be poured in.

That's got to be the message -
It's the phrase I want to give you today.

John gives us some great images.
Actually - the Christian life is abundant with symbols to give us life.

Pour yourself out.
Pour yourself out into your mission.
Pour yourself out into your family.
Pour yourself out into your church.
Pour yourself out into your community.
Pour yourself out into the world God loves so much.



One final story:
J. D. Salinger's third book *Franny and Zooey* (1961)
Franny is a 20 year old theology major.
She has just come home from college for a long weekend.
She is a nervous wreck.
Her concerned mother – brings her a cup of chicken soup.

Franny – unhappy – impatient – depressed – pushes the steaming cup of soup away.

Franny's brother Zooey sees this rejection and is indignant.

"I'll tell you one thing – Franny" – he says.

If it's religious life you're studying -
you ought to know that you are missing out on every single religious action
that's going on in this house.

You don't have enough sense to drink of cup of consecrated chicken soup -
which is the only kind of chicken soup that Mom ever brings to anybody.



What was Franny missing?

Franny is missing this:

"Mom's chicken soup" is "poured out"

as a sacrament to soothe the soul –

to quash the queasiness of a depressed daughter.

The soup is a sacrament – and the pouring out of the soup is the healing.

There is just something about pouring out that seems to be spiritual -
seems to mix with the sacred – the hand of God.



It tries to communicate love.

It communicates meaning and care.

So – from the first pouring out of wine for joy at the wedding in Cana
to the pouring out of wine as a symbol of his life blood -
we have this image of what the divine must be like.

Living fully has something to do with pouring ourselves out -
never hoarding – never stockpiling our time and talents and gifts.



This pouring out of love - that Jesus does right before us –
begins with this great wedding in Cana -
with wine overflowing.



Well – here we are – back where we came in – near the beginning of John.



May your life overflow with all you ever need -
and may you pour it out for others and for the world.
And may that give you joy.