

July 2016

My dear friends,

Let's talk about Brussel sprouts.

I had to eat them once when I was a kid and they were awful. I mean really bad. Over-boiled, mushy and bitter. But I didn't have a choice. I ate them. We were visiting and they were put before me, and I ate them. So, after this gastronomical disaster, I wouldn't even consider eating that awful cruciferous menace if I had any other option. Flash forward about 42 years. I had been invited to dinner at a friend's house. The weather was cold and snowy, but inside was welcome, warmth and friends. About 10 of us gathered around the beautifully set table and I saw the delicious meal set before us—it was heavenly! Until I saw the vegetables. You got it—Brussels sprouts. The voice of my kind and gentle mother echoed—"eat what is put before you". Does this sound familiar?

When Jesus sent the disciples out into the world in pairs to tell everyone about the Good News of God's love for all people, he gave his disciples some instructions. "Don't take any money; don't stay in hotels—if you are invited into a house, stay there. Eat the food they give you." He wanted his disciples to accept the generosity and hospitality of the people they were serving—to become a part of that community. I think that there is another message here as well. Sometimes our lives are filled with unpleasant, negative or hurtful things. Some things we can change. Some things we can't. Jesus reminds us over and over again that God is with us, we are with God. When faced with trouble we look to God for courage and patience to endure the difficult times and situations. Always look for the grace. And grace will be there.

Let me tell you the end of the dinner story. I tasted the Brussels sprouts put before me. They were perfectly roasted, wonderfully seasoned and absolutely delicious. It was all in the cooking, I realized. That hated vegetable became a favorite, transformed by care, love and the right recipe. God's love is like being served Brussels sprouts. God does not guarantee that our lives will be free of trouble. God's promise is that God's love is always with us, that God's grace abounds to transform us, to transform the reality of our experience from bitter to blessed.

Your Sister in Christ,
Mother Bonnie+