

Dear Friends,

Some are calling it ***Paw & Order***. Regardless of what it is called, the a-***mews***-ing “I’m Not a Cat” video has gone viral! It has ***litter***-ally been viewed around the world. The one-minute episode features yesterday’s Zoom conference hearing from the 394th Judicial District Court in Texas. There were three participants on the Zoom call: two lawyers and a judge.

As the three attempted to conduct their legal proceeding, one of the ***paw***-ticipants – Ron Ponton, a country attorney – had the cat filter activated on his computer, which resulted in him being pictured as a cat. No ***kitten***’ around – it was ***furr*** real!

To the other men on the call, ***purr***-petrator Mr. Ponton says about the cat filter, “I don’t know how to remove it. I’ve got my assistant here and she’s trying to.” It turns out that the computer belongs to Ponton’s assistant, whose daughter had been playing with the computer and the filter settings.

In order to proceed with the legal business, Ponton says in his usual, non-altered voice, “I’m prepared to go forward with it.” And then ***hiss***-terically adds in deadpan clarification: ***“I’m here live. I’m not a cat.”***

What could have been ***cat***-astrophic, was simply a well-received and much needed laugh in the midst of the daily barrage of sad and serious news stories.

Yesterday, Ann Labby and I emailed the February confirmation class schedule to the confirmands, parents, and sponsors. I wrote that in view of the two sessions that the class already had – “Who Is God?” and “Who Is Jesus?” – our next meeting would focus on the question, “Who Am I?” When I wrote the email, it didn’t occur to me that one would need to say “I’m not a cat” in answer to the question “Who am I?”!!

“Who am I” is a good question for the confirmands – and for all of us – to answer. The question was poignantly asked by Lutheran pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer who lived from 1906-1941. Bonhoeffer was a German who was imprisoned and ultimately executed by the Nazis for participating in a plot to kill Hitler. Bonhoeffer wrote a poem titled, “Who Am I?” In it, he marvels at how people see him as so calm, strong, and faithful when inside he is weak, suffering, scared, and alone.

He wonders how he can be both strong and weak. He questions how he can be one person outwardly while inwardly another. He writes: “Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine. Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am Thine!”

Bonhoeffer’s circumstances were dire, and yet, he shares a universal truth that God knows who we are for we are God’s. We are thine. As we anticipate Valentine’s Day this Sunday with invitations to “Be my Valentine,” remember that each of us belongs to God. Each of us can claim Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s words, “Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am Thine!”

God bless,
Jane