



Although sharing much common ground when it comes to philosophy and ministry, often Mary and Bob find themselves approaching ministerial concerns from different angles... *He said - She said* is a venue to share differing perspectives and provide food for thought.

Story of a Tree

Mary's Perspective:

Let me tell you a story about a tree...

It can seem like we live in very troubling times. Natural disasters, political smear campaigns, scandal within the church, and daily gloomy news stories can be overwhelming. More and more people claim to be "spiritual, just not religious". We look at the empty pews each Sunday, recognize that the funerals far outnumber the baptisms, and wonder how much longer it will be before we are part of another round of church consolidations. It's easy to get caught up in the negative.

But Advent reminds us that we are a people of hope.

So let me share a story... a few weeks ago, our parish was hosting a fundraiser in the form of a cabbage roll dinner. In preparation for the dinner, there were lots of potatoes to be peeled. A group of guys came to help. You know the type - they are the ushers at mass, the ones who hold the door for you, who help out in the food bank or jumpstart your car when the battery dies. It was a cold and blustery day. The kind of day when warm, rustic mashed potatoes really hit the spot.

And so these guys came to spend an hour peeling potatoes. Except when they got to the church, they saw a giant tree had blown over during the night. The tree was huge, with deep roots that literally lifted the surrounding earth, and branches that fell against the building. In the gusty winds, there was concern the tree would blow and roll and wreak havoc to the building, the nearby playground, or even cars or passers-by.

Once the potatoes were peeled (after all, what's a cabbage roll dinner without mashed taters?), the guys bundled up, grabbed supplies from their vehicles (don't you keep a couple of chain saws in the back of your truck?) and got to work. In the next 5 hours, the tree was reduced to a pile of firewood that was whisked away. In the midst of the blustery cold, these guys who came to peel some potatoes spent hours to make things better. They saved the church the substantial cost of professional tree removal. By the grace of God, the surrounding windows remained intact. They put aside any plans they may have had for a productive Saturday, risked frostbite, missed the college football games, and got to work.

Yes we are surrounded by negative news. Yes we live in challenging times.

But we are a people of hope. Happy Advent!



Bob's Perspective:

Let me tell you a story about a tree...

Last week, I came home to a beautifully kept yard. The company that mows my lawn and backyard had just finished cleaning up all of the leaves and debris – and did a terrific job as usual. There in the midst of this beauty is a tree that stands about 20 feet tall, and had not dropped a single leaf.

Since I got home in the evening, it was hard to see everything that had been done. So, the next morning, I went outside to take a look around. Much to my chagrin, the only tree that had leaves decided that this was a great time to be denuded, and dropped every single leaf right into my newly cleaned yard! Usually, I take things in stride, but this wasn't a usual event.

Wasting no time, I took out my hacksaw and hatchet, and chopped that baby down! Feeling less than satisfied by my crazed revenge, I cut the fallen tree into pieces that would fit into 2 waste container and 4 yard bags. Now that felt good!!! (Although, my back has been killing me for several days now.)

The moral of my story: I don't have one...that's just how it goes sometimes.

Have a blessed Advent!