

Sustaining the Journey



Mary and Bob often find themselves sharing common ground when it comes to philosophy and ministry. When approaching ministerial concerns from different angles, He Said - She Said is a venue to share differing perspectives. WE Said reflects some mutual food for thought. (And then again, sometimes we're exactly on the same page - just sayin' - Bob)

The Bitter and the Sweet

Bob and Mary's Perspective:

In the week after Epiphany, the daily Scriptures remind us of Jesus' great power. We hear that he cured diseases, taught in fulfillment of the ancient Scriptures, healed a man of leprosy, and miraculously multiplied simple loaves and fish. On one of those days, the Gospel recants the story of Jesus walking on the water. See [Mark 6:45-52](#).

For the basic recap, this comes right after Jesus feeds 5,000 with five loaves and a couple of fish. All ate and were satisfied, and there were still buckets of leftovers. Then Jesus sends the disciples out in the boat ahead of him to the next destination, while he hangs back to pray. Out on the sea, the wind starts tossing the boat around. So Jesus walks on the sea toward them.

Now, can we just pause a minute here? Jesus – the same guy they have been spending time with, the friend who literally makes miracles happen – is walking ON WATER. This is clearly not a sight they would see on a regular basis. They see him, and how do they react? Do they say, "Whoa, cool!?" Do they bow down in homage at the Divine power present among them? No. They freak out. They were terrified. And then Jesus reassures them, gets in the boat with them, and the winds calm.

"They were [completely] astounded. They had not understood the incident of the loaves. On the contrary, their hearts were hardened." (Mark 6:51-52)

Reflecting on this story, a priest friend of ours observed that the disciples got to experience Jesus in a more tangible way than we do. They physically spend time with him. They travel with him. Eat with him. They witness miracles. And yet, even with that kind of intimacy, their hearts were hardened. They were overcome with fear.

It has been said that fear is an anachronism for "false evidence appearing real." Think about that. When you are afraid, what causes it? Often, we are afraid of the unknown. We fear the



worst. We conjure stories or scenarios in our heads, let our minds run with it, and allow that false narrative to cloud our thinking and intrude on our thoughts. It seems like those disciples did just that. Even with the tangible experience of Jesus in their midst, they let false evidence intrude.

In some ways, we could consider this and use it to bolster our own feelings. After all, those guys got to touch Jesus and eat and walk with him, and still they were afraid. No wonder we experience fear! No wonder our steps falter and we lose focus. But what good does that do, really? Is there some consolation in thinking, “well, we may not have that strong of faith, but neither did the disciples, and they’re supposed to be holier than us!”? Does this offer comfort, or challenge?

To complete our thoughts on this Scripture, we turn to the first reading of that same day. It is an excerpt from the first letter of John. In part, it says:

“There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment, and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love.” (1 John 4:18)

Once we are perfected in love, we no longer fear. Once we truly are one with Jesus, that love drives away the fear. There is no more room for false evidence that appears real. No space for anxiety, or worry, or dreading the unknown. Once we embrace the call to love and be loved, we no longer fear. Hardened hearts are softened.

So why such a heady reflection?

We wanted to lay a foundation of where our current discernment has taken us. We have been spending time reflecting on our ministry, and listening for the Spirit’s guidance, and plotting the next steps of our journey. And now we share the fruits of that reflection with you, our dear readers.

We have said it many times: when we formed *Sustaining the Journey* over twelve years ago, we had no idea where the Lord would take us. We both just had an overwhelming sense that we were supposed to reach a little higher. We knew we had gifts and experience that could be used to help others. We started this adventure with the intent of passing on knowledge to the next generation, caring for the care providers, and encouraging lives that are healthy, happy, and



whole. Through music and writing, workshops and retreats, great highs and lows, and a whole lot of joy, we have followed a path that we believe has been divinely inspired. We have been tremendously blessed by those who have encouraged and supported this venture. We have consumed gallons of coffee, walked literally hundreds of miles, and learned more than our fair share of music.

In the early days, we offered workshops in many locations because colleagues were very gracious about opening doors for us. In some ways, we had a message in search of a venue. Trusted confidants encouraged us to use a variety of platforms to share our message. We began writing blogs, developed a website, continued to offer presentations, and mixed in a regular dose of inspiration from others.

The bottom line is that, in the early days, the Lord made straight the path for us. He enabled us to use our collective voice to mentor others, facilitate prayer, and encourage growth. We received abundant gifts along that path, sometimes disguised as great challenges, and our skills were honed for the next steps. We recognize that as we look back.

Looking ahead, more doors have opened. Between Mary's diocesan position and Bob's "unretirement," we are blessed with frequent opportunities to continue the mission of *Sustaining the Journey* in tangible ways. We also find ourselves challenged to write our twice-monthly blog. There are now many established venues for our message, and the words that used to spill out faster than we could type have quieted. It would appear that a curve in the path has been presented, and we are enthusiastically embracing this turn.

Over the next several months, this He Said-She Said blog will take a hiatus. We will continue to offer Two for Tuesday inspirations – possibly with some of our own inspirations splattered in. We have been exploring additional media, so don't be surprised if you start seeing some of our work in different forms. (Was that enough of a subtle hint?) As for the next steps, we still have no idea where the path leads, but we love a great adventure!

Change is often bittersweet. The older we get, the more we appreciate some of the nuances in life. Yes, the grass can seem greener from someone else's perspective, but if you look for it, you can find a whole lot of good in your own perspective. In our last blog, we encouraged you to be



intentional about seeking balance, to tell your own story authentically (commit it to writing!), and to deliberately seek joy and embody hope.

Beyond all, remember that love conquers fear. Be bold without trepidation! Thank you for your encouragement and support, for hanging in there with our ramblings, and for filling our lives with sweet joy. Keep an eye on our website, where we will continue sharing our journey as it unfolds, and know that we hold you in prayer. We humbly ask for your prayers, too, as we embrace the next step on our journey.