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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.

## Unpacking – The Journey Continues

*Bob's Perspective:*

Just as it's important for our Neophytes to take time in reflecting (mystagogy-ing) upon their experiences – especially those of the Lenten Season and the Triduum, I think an essential element of effective ministry is for all of us to do the same.

As many are aware, I tend to be a “big picture person.” While I certainly attend to details as needed, I often tend to not be concerned so much about details, but more about the overall effect of our celebration. I can say that this year it was definitely the case – and for good reason. I'm lucky enough to be surrounded with dedicated people who take their roles seriously. When Mary was appointed Director of our Diocesan Office for Worship just a couple of weeks before the beginning of Lent, I stepped into a pretty big pair of shoes (figuratively that is). Although I have a lot of years of experience, every parish has its own way and system of getting things done – and Mary left things very well organized, so in that regard, I had a lot to learn in a short amount of time.

If you remember from our last blog ([Unpacking](#)), I defined mystagogy as meaning, “so what?”. By and large, things went very well – no major hitches, but a few things that need to get polished up for next year. I was especially glad that Mary agreed to be our accompanist during the Triduum. We work very well together, no matter which of us is in charge. In my opinion, it made for a good transitional experience for our Music Ministry and our parish in general.

So here are my “so whats”:

1. Our number one goal was met. The people of God were fed and inspired. The experiences of Lent and Holy Week nourished their souls and inspired them in continued growth.
2. Those wishing to be fully initiated into the Church were welcomed and well supported by the OCIA Team and the Assembly, as evidenced by their attendance and enthusiastic participation.
3. Our Music Ministry (including myself) experienced a sense of ease and recommitment in our transitional time, thanks in part to Mary's help and the dedication of our people.



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4. I personally sensed an overwhelming gratefulness for all of those with whom and to whom I'm privileged minister.

Two years ago, when I retired from full time ministry, I never thought I'd be back in the driver's seat. Although I'm an interim director (we have plans for future recruiting – so my task is to work myself out of a job again), my biggest “so what” is in the sense of being back home, feeling welcomed, and being grateful for the honor of serving my parish family once again.

If you haven't already done so, do a little “mystagogy-ing.” Don't just concentrate on the mechanics, but really dig into your experiences – the effects and the “so what's,” and by all means take time to rejoice!

Happy Easter!

*Mary's Perspective:*

Are you having some sense of déjà vu all over again? Yes, we wrote about mystagogy in our last blog, but we really believe it is important to be intentional in unpacking the experience – whatever experience you are examining.

When I think about mystagogy, I tend to wander down two paths. First, I think logistically. I know Bob is not one to be mired in the details. I think that's part of why we work well together – he pretty much leaves the details to me! My first part of reflecting on an experience or event is to consider the physical manifestations. If we're talking about a vacation, I consider the accommodations, perhaps the airline we used, or how I might pack differently next time. Maybe I rank the level of service or consider how I might avoid issues that interrupted “the plan.” When I think about the nuts and bolts of this year's Triduum, I'm honestly pretty content. Bob is right in that things went smoothly, people prayed well, and we successfully managed another year of lighting lots of candles without burning down the church.

That being considered, my mind wanders down a more reflective, deeper path. As we partook of the Mandatum, the washing of feet, I was filled with an overwhelming sense of “this is family being family.” It felt right. At our parish, all are invited to wash and be washed. We've written about this before – washing feet isn't exactly romantic or enticing or thrilling. It's an act of service, of caring for each other, of recognizing that toes may be gnarly, but each person has dignity and value and is worth our time and care. On Holy Thursday, my heart was full because we were family, caring for each other.



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On Good Friday, my mind returns to Adoration of the Holy Cross. The Cross, a sign of the brutality of man, of anguish and grief, also is a sign of triumph. We know we can't have Easter Sunday without Good Friday. I contemplate not only the trials in my life, but those of all who attended the Passion liturgy. Immersed in the sights and smells and sounds – an incredibly haunting soprano voice who literally gave me goosebumps – the communal prayer was palpable. I could go on and on, but you get the picture.

I have another thought to share. Shortly after Easter, I was invited to a meeting of colleagues in a similar role. This multi-day meeting was held at a retreat center that provided a welcome respite from the demands of the downtown office. The Solemnity of the Annunciation fell during our time gathered together. (Nerd note: Typically, the Annunciation is celebrated on March 25. This year, because that date fell during holy week, the celebration was deferred to April 8.)

A priest friend reflected that, during the Passion, Jesus said "I AM" three different times. When considering the Annunciation, we often talk about Mary's "yes," but her actual response to the angel was "I AM the handmaid of the Lord..." (See [Luke 1:26-38](#).) When we went around the table at the beginning of the meeting to introduce ourselves, every single attendee began with "I am," and then identified name and title, that is, our job and diocese. Many people, especially those who work outside the home, draw their identity from what they do. For example, I am a musician, or I am a dentist, or I am a plumber. This wise new friend reflected that Mary's "I AM" was not about a duty, but rather about a relationship. He challenged us to consider our relationship with the Lord, and with each other, and with those folks who are in the circle of our ministry or influence. Besides being thought-provoking, I thought that was an awesome example of mystagogy.

We are people of substance and depth. If we let our Lenten journey and the experience of Triduum just blow by then, truly, "so what?" How has the journey transformed us? How have we died to past sin and risen to a deeper level of discipleship?

And, finally, just a note to Bob... I may have baby feet, but they help keep me nimble and leave plenty of room for growth!