



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.

Dream a Little!

Mary's Perspective:

My husband and I were musing the other day about hitting the winning lottery numbers. Mind you, one has to play to win, and I don't purchase lottery tickets, but it's fun to dream a little! Anyway, we were considering what we would do if we were to come into a large sum of money. I found it to be an interesting and fruitful conversation.

The good thing about being a parent and theoretically becoming a gazillionaire is being able to put one's mind to rest when it comes to helping offspring get set for life. No more worries about college tuition or house downpayments, though there is certainly wisdom to setting up the structure of a trust and requiring said offspring to work in order to understand the value of money. But, once you settle your own financial matters and take care of the kids, what is next?

I found some unique differences between my husband's thoughts on this, and mine. He likes the idea of creature comforts and a supportive staff to maintain that level of living, which certainly has its appeal. However, when he asked me what I would do, it didn't take much contemplation for me to blurt out my answer: once our family was set with appropriate creature comforts and trusts, I would create a foundation to change the world for the better. I want to have a positive impact in a well-thought-out way.

Here's where it gets challenging. I don't know what area, geographically and topically, that foundation would serve. My daughter had a dream of tutoring inner-city girls on computer coding, so that they could get great jobs and break the cycle of poverty. I have a lot of friends who are passionate about feeding those in need. Teaching young ones to read, providing music or other inspiration for those in nursing homes, and assisting those who find themselves unexpectedly pregnant are all ideas worth considering. Support the church? Start a trade school? Truly, what am I so passionate about that I want to go all in?

Perhaps one can blow this off because I'm not likely to come into that type of financial windfall, but it made me think a little more. If I could figure out what cause I want to support, perhaps I could start now, at least in small ways, before I am a gazillionaire.



No long-winded blog here, just a head scratcher. What would you do if money was suddenly no concern? How would you change life for the better? Dare to dream!

Bob's Perspective:

So, here's the thing. Mary sent me her perspective on this topic about two weeks ago. I struggled with this one quite a bit. If money wasn't a concern, what would I do? Would I spend it on myself? Would I give it away? It's a real quandary, to say the least. So, for the last couple of weeks, I've asked myself every day, "If money wasn't a concern, what would I do?" Until this morning, I had nothing to say.

I'm sitting at my desk, writing this blog on Labor Day. As on many civil holidays, I start off with giving thanks by way of attending Mass. So, this morning as I sat in the pew waiting for Mass to begin (still spinning that question in my head), I simply prayed for a little bit of wisdom and insight. I'm a firm believer that God always answers our prayers – not always to our liking or expectation, but he always answers – and today he ANSWERED in a big way!

As the Presider read today's Gospel (from "For the Blessing of Human Labor") I almost burst out laughing:

So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?' All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil. Matthew 6:31-34

And there it was! Rather than coming at this topic from the perspective of money not being a concern because we have plenty, maybe I should address the angle of money (or even the lack thereof) being a concern at all. (What??? Ok, I know what some may be thinking, but just stay with me on this for bit.) I tucked the thought away in the back of my mind to percolate a little. Later in the day, I went to a favorite place out in the country, kicked back and reflected. A specific incident came to mind.

On July 2, 1983, I was at a campout with some friends near Lake Chautauqua in western New York. While there, I met a girl with whom I instantly fell in love – her name was Maureen. I wasn't looking to meet someone, and certainly wasn't interested in settling down until that very instant. Throughout the course of the camp out we spent a lot of time



together. She was actually from the West Side of Cleveland. I knew with all my heart that she was the one. When it was finally time to go home, I got her phone number and promised to call her. Side note: neither the cell phone nor the internet existed at that time, so everything happened by landline and snail-mail.

During this period of my life, I made my living as a musician in the rock n' roll bar band idiom. I generally earned enough money for a single guy but was aware that I would need to do a lot better if I were to engage in a serious relationship. At that time, I occasionally played for some weekend liturgies at my home parish. While I enjoyed doing that, I never considered actually working for the Church. I certainly didn't want to be known as a "Church Musician." Egad! That would amount to sounding the death toll for a rock star's image! Anyway, as my companions and I made our way down the highway toward Cleveland, I found myself actually praying for a little guidance.

That evening, when I got home, I noticed some mail (addressed to me) sitting on my table. The return address was that of a church which neighbored my home parish. I opened the letter, and almost fell over. The letter was from the pastor of that church (I didn't know him at the time). He had been trying to get in touch with me and offered me the position of Music Director – a full time position at his church! I immediately called him, and within a couple of days we interviewed, and I accepted his offer. Meanwhile, I called Maureen, and we started dating. A few months later we were engaged, and then got married about a year after. We lasted for almost 30 years, until she passed away in 2015. Now if that's not enough, here's the real kicker: the pastor's letter was dated July 1, 1983 – the day before I met Maureen. Over time, I came to realize that God knew what I needed even before I did, and had already put it into motion: calling me to ministry in the Church and pairing me (at least for a while) with the love of my life.

I'd be willing to bet that as one reads the incident that I just recounted, they could find similar happenings in their own lives. Think back to an occasion when you received unexpected help from someone, or when a plan just fell into place with little (if any) effort. Think of a time when you met someone (maybe a friend, a spouse, a teacher) whose interaction would change the course of your life – or of a beautiful gift that just appeared out of the blue. As a matter of fact, once reflected upon, each of us would most likely be able to site numerous incidents.



Okay, so what does all of this have to do with dreaming about, "If money wasn't a concern, what would I do?" I'm certainly not saying that we should just cast fate to the wind and live haphazardly and irresponsibly. We still need to do our part – be diligent, work hard, and above all, be thankful (and express thanksgiving) for the blessings we receive, both great and small. God truly knows our needs and takes care of us according to his plan – even at times when situations aren't looking too good. But, if we learn to trust in him, our personal concerns (be they money, family issues, etc.) won't become overwhelming and hopeless – and when we free ourselves from those bonds, we can truly be free to follow our dreams.