



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.

Three Solutions

A note from Bob and Mary:

As summer has full-fledged descended upon us, we are reflecting on the rapid-fire pace of changes and challenges of the past four months. What is the analogy? The shoemaker's kids are barefoot? In an attempt to practice what we preach - that is, self-care and balance are essential - we have decided, for the summer months, to offer a "sneak peek" into the books that we intend to publish.

For perspective, we are in the process of editing (some number of) compilations of past blogs, with descriptive introductions before each section. For those who have been followers of *Sustaining the Journey* for a long time - and thank you for that! - some of this may sound familiar, as we are drawing from blogs written as far back as 2016. The introductions, however, have never been published, so we are offering at least a bit of new material in each of these summer postings. We welcome feedback!

In essence, this summer shift is providing three solutions:

- 1) It gives us time for self-care.
- 2) It offers an opportunity to re-balance our lives, juggling work and writing, ministry and vacations, health and sleep.
- 3) A sneak-peek into upcoming publications gives you the inside track, a chance to offer feedback, and possibly motivates us to focus on finishing these projects.

Be assured that this is not the end of new HS-SS blogs, simply a time for us to catch our breath. We are committed to offering valuable, holy, and fresh insights in future blogs that will begin the first of September. May your summer be restful, refreshing, inspiring, and may we all reach some semblance of balance! Know that we hold you in prayer. We humbly ask for your prayers for us.



Appropriately, our first re-visit begins with a chapter on Balance, Self-Care, and Self-Improvement:



Truthfully, this section could have been written ten years ago, last year, or yesterday... while we make good observations and have the best intentions, our attempts at mindfulness and balance are not always as successful as one might hope. If that's true in your life, you are in good company! However, the important thing is to keep trying. Bob likes to quote Rocky movies: it doesn't matter how many times you fall; what counts is how many times you get back up.

Motivation Begins with Addressing Your Own Needs (6/15/16)

Mary's Perspective:

The definition of insanity is repeating the same behavior, but expecting different results. I am reminded of this not only because school is out and our busy household could rock even the most stable person...but because summer is generally a great time to evaluate where we've been and where we are going. For many music ministers, summer is a time when the ebb and flow of parish life calms a bit. Our choir takes a break over summer, and I try to use the time to clean out my files, get organized for the next liturgical year, and take some much-needed time at the pool with my children! It's also time to consider what I will do differently this year. As a church leader, what tweaks will I make to encourage all involved to grow in positive ways? How will I build our ministries and nourish our volunteers? Bob and I have done entire workshops on best practices for learning from experience and incorporating it into our look ahead, and so a simple blog won't begin to scratch the surface – but I do offer here a few reflections... (If you'd like us to do an evening at your location to reflect and inspire, to look back and look ahead, just let us know!)

I've often said I can't be a good Mommy unless I'm a good grown-up, and I can't be a good grownup unless I take care of some of my own needs. When I'm out of balance, nobody is happy. Summer is a great time to seek balance, especially if Triduum/Easter/end-of-year planning has left you feeling depleted. Think of it like spokes on a wheel. When one or two are bent, the tire still rotates, but not as smoothly. When many spokes are broken, the whole tire is out of whack. For me, the spokes include things like my relationship with God, living in fulfillment with my spouse, making enough money to meet my needs and save some, attending to my physical needs, spending time with my kids, expressing artistry, and making a positive difference in the world. When my spokes are out of balance, I get cranky, I work too hard, I eat too much, I don't sleep well, and it becomes a downward spiral – the worse I feel, the more I repeat the behaviors that got me there in the first place.



The good news is, the sun is shining, we can walk outside and take a deep breath, and our ministry may (should) afford us some time RIGHT NOW to care for our needs. How will you attend to the process?

Each person has their own approach. Bob loves to drive, so his wanderlust will no doubt add many miles to his car this summer. I walk – typically I aim for 12 miles in the park every week. It's good for my mind and my body. We will go on retreat and attend some continuing education classes. I also make it a point to take some time to play the piano, color in a coloring book, sew/crochet/paint, and even do handstands in the pool (it makes my kids' friends think I'm the cool mom). Summer is also a good time to look at your personal finances, perhaps evaluate your work situation, reconnect with friends at a cookout (fresh food and nurturing relationships – a "two-fer"!), and clean out some of the clutter that has accumulated insidiously.

If I can identify what stands in the way of balance, if I can identify some goals and actions to fulfill those goals, I'm much more likely to take the next step and actually make a positive change. And if I tend to these needs, I'm definitely going to be in a better frame of mind to grow in ministry. Although it may seem frivolous or selfish to spend time on myself, really, it's the only way to make things better for those around me. Motivation really does begin with addressing my own needs!

Bob's Perspective:

Mary has hit on an area in which I admittedly need some work. Sometimes I feel as though planning downtime is more work than it's worth. Many of us have been there – taking just a short time off now and again so that things in the office or on the job don't build up to become overwhelming upon our return. On the surface, this concept may seem to have its merits, but that's really more of a perception than reality. Our minds and bodies need rest. Rest is not a selfish concept. As a matter of fact, God has insisted on this by his own action in the book of Genesis and by his law as stated in the third Commandment.

On the seventh day, after doing all of the work of creation, what did God do? He took the day off and kicked back – not only to relax, but also to enjoy the fruits of his work. This concept is so important that he gave us the commandment, "Remember thou, keep holy the LORD's day." The Church interprets this as meaning that we should take time to worship God and give him thanks for all that he has done for us – and it's absolutely essential that we do this – not only for the sake of thanksgiving, but also to help us in forming a proper mindset about our own existence. God invites us to rest with him and in him. We show God the intensity of our thankfulness by taking specific time (the LORD's day) in a specific place (the Church) to offer our prayers of gratefulness and adoration together as his people. But worship is about more than that – it's about ENJOYING and caring for God's gifts! It's about taking care of our minds and bodies, which are temples of the Holy Spirit – fantastic gifts from God – that need to be cared for



and well maintained. This is especially true for ministers of the Church, who are responsible for multiple weekend celebrations of worship. For many of us it is our busiest workday – as well as a day of worship.

Getting proper rest and exercise is crucial to our creativeness and longevity. From a certain point of view, it can be said that not taking a proper and generous amount of time for our physical, mental and spiritual needs is selfish. We can't give ourselves to others in significant and meaningful ways if we lack creativity, physical wholeness and the strong, positive mental attitudes that only rest and care for ourselves can provide.

Just sayin'!