Sojourning (and Dancing) With Reverence

Today as I was standing at the kitchen sink eating my breakfast, I looked at a magnet on my refrigerator which read “Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass. Life is about learning to dance in the rain.” After eight weeks or so of trying to “dance (alone, thank you very much!) in the rain”, I am more than frustrated. I want the rain to stop so I can see you folks again, celebrate Mass, feed spiritually hungry and maybe hope-weary people, forgive sins and otherwise feel like I have earned my keep as a priest. I want not to feel like screaming at the customers at Fresh Market who aren’t wearing masks because, somehow, wearing 23 square inches of cloth on their face to protect others is just too much of an infringement on their personal rights to even ask of them! In short, I’m not doing so good and I am looking at Scripture and my meditations for some sort of guidance. As usual, God drops something in my lap addressing my questions in a way that stretches me to try to “live Jesus” right now.

Several Sundays ago, had we had Mass, we would have heard this passage from the First Letter of St. Peter (1:17)

“Beloved: if you invoke as Father him who judges impartially

according to each man’s works, *conduct yourself with reverence during the time of your sojourning….*”

One thing we can hold onto right now is that we are “Beloved” and, if Beloved, then we are not forgotten or left on our own to sojourn through the now unpredictable and rocky road of life, love or faith. And if I am beloved, then so is everyone else and I need to reverence that Godly reality in them as we, together, negotiate the unknowns before us. Staying as we are in our current reality, be it in our faith or in our Covid19-tainted world is not an option. Life is not lived; faith is not strengthened if we stay cocooned in the shelter of our home or in the small understandings of our faith. We have to sojourn together and in mutual reverence to wherever God is directing us. That may mean, for a time, that some of our “rights” need to cede for the good of others until we reach a safer reality. Try as we might, we don’t all sojourn gracefully or at the same speed but I think the Gospel calls us to keep at it. Maybe my momma was right… “Bless their hearts; they’re doing the best they can! “ So, God is at work at a different speed in them than He is with us. He is nonetheless still at work and we should respond in reverence to His action within them---- even if they aren’t wearing a mask and have filled their cart with the last available toilet paper in Dare County.

“Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass. It is about learning to dance in the rain.” It looks like the storm is going to be with us for a while still. How goes your dancing?

A final note--- in a previous article I mentioned a lily bulb that was persisting to push through the hardened garden outside to send out its shoot and blossom. I said that it was a sign to me of persisting in hope in the midst of this Covid19 chaos. Well, it is still there and has developed several buds that should be blooming in a week or so. I’m taking it as a sign from God that things will get better and that all will be well. I’ll take whatever I can get to “keep dancing” in the storm--- may even boogie!

May God be blest.