

October 30, 2020

I wonder if Pope Francis thinks about how what he says and writes drives some people right up the wall, I wonder if he waits to hear their reactions, or does he just go about his business. He certainly never seems to be in an uproar or too terribly concerned about the reactions that he gets.

Last week many folks were all abuzz and flustered over his remarks that at their roots suggested the legitimization of civil unions for people in same sex relationships.

Earlier in the autumn in his encyclical Fratelli Tutti, he marginalized the legitimacy of the, so called, Just War Theory, attributed to Saint Augustine as unworkable in the modern world of technological warfare thereby dismissing the legitimacy of war with some kind of Church approval or an endorsement from Jesus Christ or God.

He has placed capital punishment in the category of sin finding no justification for it ever which caused an uproar among the folks that is still simmering.

His foray into Christian moral sensitivity relative to divorced and remarried Catholics caused some of the guys to go into a kind of apoplectic seizure that they are not over yet.

His refusal to see the people of the world through a single prism of outer behavior is very consistent with how I read the Jesus Christ characters in the four Gospels.

I know that there is a chronic need on the part of some to see a single minded Jesus Christ and I know that conventional Christianity tries to compress the Gospel Christ into one version of the historical Jesus but that just isn't possible unless you force your mind to ignore the reality of four different compositions that together make up the one piece of literature that we call Gospel.

That need is really an unhealthy co-dependency, an addiction rooted in a lack of self-knowledge and self-love, in my experience.

The Good News isn't a single bit of information or dogma, but a conversation initiated by one of the People of God and picked up by other People of God.

Faith comes through hearing, so something has to be spoken, as Saint Francis reminds us, sometimes using words, something has to be “spoken” and “heard” and then there is the possibility of faith.

In the document created during the Second Vatican Council addressing the Church in the modern world, *Gaudium and Spes*, Joy and Hope, the Church teaches **that “Holy Spirit-- in a manner known to God alone-- offers to every person the possibility of being a partner in the paschal mystery.”**

That kind of language doesn’t go very far in the noisy world that we live in, I know, but that kind of language is what gives us reason to believe in the significance of our own lives and the works of God in time and place.

We don’t hear it often and in recent years our Church has been making itself more and more irrelevant with all the whining about being an innocent victim of a secularized culture filled with godless young people.

Our teaching not our opinion clearly tells us that God in Christ through the Holy Spirit is present in our midst, healing, forgiving, inspiring, sustaining, teaching, and holding in non-abandoning love this weary and worn world of ours.

That being said, I need some of you who read these posts to consider being available to talk on the telephone, maybe, FaceTime or Zoom or whatever with some of our young Confirmation kids about your faith, such as it is, your thoughts about how and why being Catholic has found a place in your life or how it hasn’t.

Keep that in mind.