

May 1, 2020

“Do not let your hearts be troubled, you have faith in God, have faith in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places if there were not would I tell you I am going to prepare a place for you?”

Any real faith, in my experience, has to admit doubt, serious doubt, not cynical or sinister doubt but serious doubt, because without doubt, how can it be faith?

We just cannot talk about God like we talk about an oil change or adjusting the carburetor on our riding lawn mower, it gives us a false sense of confidence that we know what we are talking about.

God is Spirit and while we want to use language that helps us understand Spirit, we have to be ever so careful and remember that the best we can do is find weak analogies or metaphors that always just suggest and not name “what eyes have not seen, nor ears heard.”

When I say we have to “admit doubt,” sometimes that doubt is an agonizing, dark, dark sleepless night of unknown duration, Jesus shed blood, after all, there are no privileged positions with faith.

So, the breezy, super confidence that I observe in clerics of all stripes and the “for profit Catholic religious education/faith formation industry” churning out that old time religion as they do these days doesn’t convince me and I am sure I am not alone.

Chipper crisp “sweet Jesus” talk is no substitute for the heart work, the broken heart work, wherein real faith can be found.

So be cautious, when you hear people speak so surely about God and the workings of God appealing not to their own hearts but to catechisms and dogmas and declarations, as if they were a Sears Catalogue of the Spirit, that kind of talk is disingenuous, their teaching is about as relevant and meaningful as a Sears Catalogue is in these times.

These times are a struggle for me, as they are for you, as they are for almost everyone.

I ache at the thought of the young, the high school seniors, the college kids, the young people who are just starting out on their grand adventure, their lives kind of cut off at the knees, as it were, their futures hanging in a purgatory of uncertainty.

The terrible toll that un-mourned grief is taking with people unable to be with loved ones in the manner that we are so used to, intensely physically present, in shared grief and shared consolation, now denied.

The exhausted front line of medical workers and caregivers in hospitals and nursing homes, the millions of unemployed and hungry.

It would be all too much, if our hearts were not aching and heavy, because it is in our hearts that are broken that the possibility of hope is found and faith might be found, and surely love is, because only hearts broken can really learn love.

Peace be with you, my friends! Peace!