

June 26, 2020

I went out for a walk the other day and on one of my routes chosen especially because of the absence of other people I came upon a lemonade stand a half a block ahead of me. I noticed it because they had one of those blow up advertising socks that jump around and it had the word lemonade in large letters.

Angrily I crossed to the other side of the street and began rehearsing a tirade about masks and social distancing in all the righteousness I could muster but thankfully I did not unload of those kids.

They were little kids, 7 or 8, maybe, 9 and they were simply doing what little kids do and have done in the summertime.

I tried to deal with my feelings but found that very difficult because I have a tendency to interpret my feelings as always being the correct response to any given situation but I was wrong and being wrong is a hard thing for me to be as I am sure it is for you.

My anger tends to be rooted in my self-assurance, in my need to be right. As much as I talk about the limitations of binary thinking I am a pretty binary thinking kind of person, I tend to see things in either/or categories.

These last few months have taken a toll on all of us and the toll is getting greater by the day, for me, at least.

There are many factors at play and trying to deal with them or process them isn't easy.

The fact that we have been required to change so much, to not do so many things as we always did so many things, to be deprived of easy contact with one another, the fact that there are real fears associated with the progression of this disease and that we could be a victim from simple contact with other people and what that might lead to, all of this and more, creates a very toxic atmosphere for all of us.

This atmosphere of resentment and fear and deprivation and confusion on top of the toxic systems of some families and institutions and ways of life is not easy to deal with and hard to escape from without seeing some path forward.

I do not want to offer you pious platitudes. I want to acknowledge that we are in a difficult time, a very difficult time, and an honest admission that it will be science and medicine that guide the path forward is not always helpful because we ask as we have before, "Are we there yet?"

We are not.

I will pray, using poetry and intentional memory of past times of meaning, this weekend for wisdom and patience.

You might have other ways of praying but the gloomy day today offers me a chance to lick my wounds, the wounds to my pride and my ego because I am not in charge and I cannot change things, I can only, as Mary Kelly reminds us in her comment yesterday, "take it one day at a time."

BTW I crossed over the street to my young unmasked and socially non-distanced friends to buy a glass of lemonade but they did not accept mobile phone payments, so I had something else to be angry at.