

August 11, 2020

In the Gospel last Sunday, a detail I have never taken note of before, keeps coming up in my stream of consciousness and that is that Jesus in the story “made” his disciples get into the boat to precede him to the other side of the lake.

I am intrigued by that “made” as Jesus makes few demands on anyone in the Gospels, he usually leaves the option open as to the response.

Does Jesus put them in harms way to teach them a lesson?

Clearly in that particular story, Matthew wants us to know that Jesus is the Fullness of Divine Presence, “God,” and I absolutely believe that the only thing that “God” can do is love so “God” does not cause or will suffering, “God” does not favor some over others, “God” is not punishing us with Covid 19 or any other affliction that may visit us, nor does “God” decide who gets prayers answered and who doesn’t, and “God” has nothing to do with winning games or contests or bingos or lotteries despite the claims of some, why do I look to some things in my own life and suspect that “God” is behind it?

Divine Providence is the theological idea or, some would say, doctrine, that “God” is sovereign and that “God” is directing all of creation according to some hidden plan and that in the end all will be well, so are some of the details of my life God’s plan and others are not?

Am I being “made” to choose or encounter or do somethings as Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and a whole lot of other things are just chance, random, unrelated to the hidden purposes of “God?”

Often, people will talk about occurrences that precede or closely follow the death of someone that they love and attribute them to some kind of Divine action or presence. I never challenge or counter what they say but that has only happened to me once and that was this spring when my young friend died.

As I approach 75 years of age, perhaps, more urgently than other times because of the possibility of infection with this virus, I reflect on the truths of my life and ask if it could have been otherwise. I reflect on particular

relationships and wonder if they were chance or if they were the work of Providence.

Was there any choice involved in some encounters while others didn't matter? Do we have so called, "free will" in some matters but not all?

Does "God" count the hairs on my head, and I am treated more carefully than sparrows and are some aspects of my life like the lilies of the field and others not?

As I say, "I love my life" is that "God's" doing or my doing? Am I the master of my own destiny, I certainly don't feel that I am a pawn in a game, and I cannot accept that "God" micromanages our lives but where is "God" in all of this?

Perhaps it is found in the love that formed and transforms me and that is the way "God" works in the lives of people who have lives of abject suffering and loss, where is "God" there?

Was "God" not with the Jewish people in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and so many other times?

How was "God" present in the lives of the many, many persecutors of the Jews?

Does "God" not love persons who do not identify themselves in acceptable categories or in the lives of those who claim to experience life differently than some think they should relative to many, many aspects that they find to be true to them?

Is there a reason for everything and if so, what has that to do with "God," did "God" cause so much suffering and so much joy and if so, why?