

Connecting New

October, 2014

This month I share two poems that may not be popular because they challenge us to become more aware of what we often would prefer to ignore. There may be some resistance, for a number of reasons, which is natural. All of us have some degree of ambivalence, we want to grow closer to God while at the same time we are reluctant to grow so close to God that it may invite us to change or act in ways we may not prefer, including becoming vulnerable. There may be resistance to becoming more aware of our own darkness, yet that awareness is the pathway to even greater experience of the depth of God's love for us. I invite you to explore this through these poems.

A Spiritual Discipline

Share your secrets as a spiritual discipline,
not someone else's secrets,
but yours.

Start first with the Examine -

"What are my secrets?"

"What is hidden away for no thief,
no friend, no spouse or offspring to find?"

"What am I hiding from myself,
and from God?"

Pick one and share it ...

not during confession,
but instead confess it in love -
give a part of yourself away,
become less isolated,
become less afraid.

Perhaps it may help to imagine

the cleanup of your life ...

after you have died,

by a family member or a friend.

Will they be surprised by the cards you saved,
the love letters you treasured?

Is there a diary that recorded feelings
of unfulfillment, resentment, jealousy,
lust and confusion?

Did you dare to write about your doubts -
the doubts good people are not supposed to have?
(We all know what these are.)

Maybe now is the time to clean up,
before you die ...
but will you destroy the evidence
or vanquish the secret by revealing it?

Perhaps you pretend you live open book, no secrets.
You can face the truth if you choose,

and look more closely.

Who knows about your money,
your sexual desires and activities,
your fears,
your disappointments,
your joys,
your dreams?

And maybe it will help to remember
that there are no secrets in heaven.

Nameless

The most faithful member of our church is Satan.
Never misses Mass. Attends every meeting.
Fully engaged in every aspect of the community.
He prefers to remain unnoticed,
standing behind a pillar or in the shadows,
not only in the sanctuary, but also our consciousness.
We too often, too easily, unwittingly collaborate with him,
judging out of a sense of righteousness,
withdrawing to remain safe and secure.
So skillful he is at prodding and provoking,
pushes our buttons just with a glance.
It's more comfortable to buy into the lie
that he does not exist, is not present with us.

Oh God, forgive us for what we have done
and what we have failed to do at the hands of the tempter,
the one who persuaded you to test Job,
the one who spoke through Peter, James and John,
and who acted through Judas.
Oh God, help us to recognize the temptations
and use them as opportunities
to grow closer to you through each other.

May we all continue, with the grace of God, to grow deeper into love, freedom and joy.

Peace and Blessings,
Clarence

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