

Although sharing much common ground when it comes to philosophy and ministry, often Mary and Bob find themselves approaching ministerial concerns from different angles... *He said - She said* is a venue to share differing perspectives and provide food for thought.

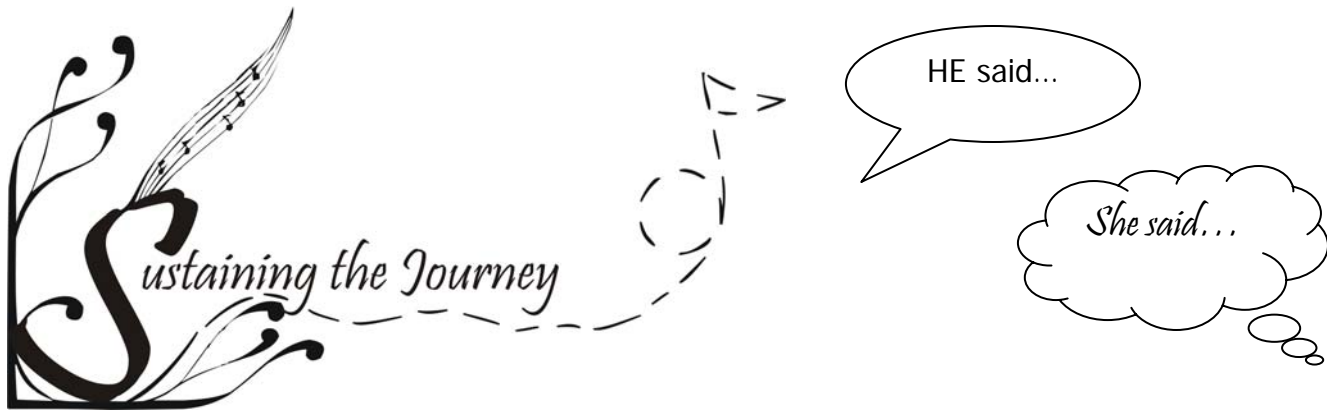
A Look Back - A Look Ahead

Bob's Perspective:

When Mary suggested this topic, I immediately called to mind the phrase “Ever ancient-ever new,” ascribed to St. Augustine. Being an ecclesial musician, my thoughts then moved to a delightful song by Marty Haugen based on Psalm 148 – “All You Works of God” (from his musical, *Tales of Wonder*). Psalm 148 is a hymn of praise in which the composer calls all of the wonders of creation (angels, people and nature) to give praise to God. (See <http://www.usccb.org/bible/psalms/148>). How is this significant to our topic? The old adage, “if you don’t learn from history, you’re bound to repeat it,” tells us of the importance of knowing from where we’ve come. In order to well forge ahead, we use the lessons learned from our past journeys to guide us. This helps us in several ways: (1) to discern the good things we’ve done and understand the causes, (2) to discern our mistakes and understand the causes, and (3) to discern how to build on all of these experiences in order to grow.

This is why prayer, meditation and ritual are such important tools. Through the practice of these disciplines our minds recall lessons through praise, thanksgiving or lamentation (*prayer*), opening us to new insights/possibilities (*meditation*), and develop habits (*rituals*) that will bring success to fruition. When it comes to mystagogy (unpacking experiences through theological reflection), one of my favorite methods is *Lectio Divina* (*Divine Reading*). For a wonderful explanation of this process, I suggest reading the short article by Sr. Antoine Lawlor, “Ever Ancient, Ever New: The Art and Practice of Lectio Divina.” (<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/catechetical-sunday/word-of-god/upload/lectio-divina.pdf>).

Most importantly, our attitudes must be POSITIVE! It’s very easy to go down the path of negativity (which is always counter-productive), so remember what Marty Haugen wrote: “*All you works of God, every mountain, star and tree, bless the One who shapes your beauty, who has caused you all to be one great song of love and grace, ever ancient, ever new. Raise your voices, all you works of God.”*



Mary's perspective:

Music often inspires me, and today's inspiration comes from the song *Enter the Journey*, by Mark Friedman and Janet Vogt.

The dictionary defines initiation as “to begin, or to get going”. When I think of my faith life, it is definitely a journey – perhaps not always a smooth path, but one filled with leaps. There are times where we obviously “get going” on the next step. Washed in the waters of Baptism, we begin anew. Confirmation, when we are empowered by God’s Spirit, given the grace to continue the next step...again is a momentous beginning. First Communion is just that – the first of many to come. It’s easy to see how these three sacraments constitute our initiation as Catholics: the beginnings of what will be a life-long journey. In marriage, we begin our life again, transformed forever as two who have become one. Even our funeral is a step on the path, even if it’s into a life we cannot see right now.

At Triduum – literally, “three days” – we began again. We washed each others’ feet as an outward sign of how we are called to serve. We brought our needs and adoration to the cross, where Jesus bore all of our pain. We retold the beginning stories again at Easter Vigil, to remember our origins, and we welcomed new members who celebrated sacraments of initiation – “getting going” on their faith journeys. Over the next couple of weeks, many of us were blessed to celebrate First Eucharist with more members, who made the next leap on their faith journeys. What a gift it is to be part of the beginning; to watch stories unfold as our lives leap ahead!

As we approach the end of the Easter Season, our gospel stories tell us over and over again how Jesus reminded his apostles (and us) that, although he will not be with them (us) in person much longer, he is going to be with the Father, and the Spirit will guide our way. There are times when we celebrate, that this Spirit is so very present, it is palpable. There are times when I struggle to feel the Spirit’s gentle guidance, yet I am confident that, as I follow this journey we have begun, it is indeed there. Summed up in the words of “*Enter the Journey*”: God’s spirit will guide us, God’s gifts will unfold...