

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.

Does your Whole have a Hole?

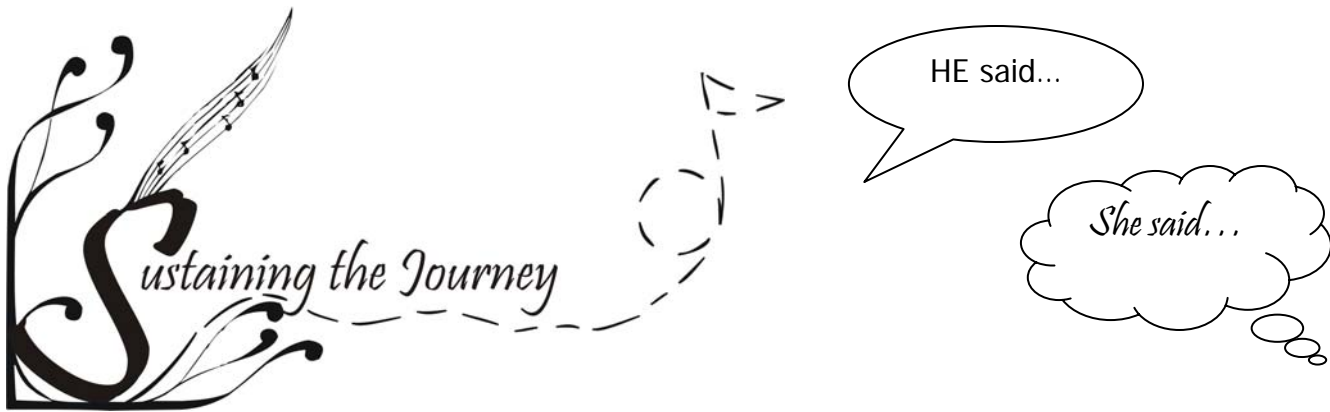
Mary's perspective:

Okay, so it's a kitchy title... but I've been thinking a lot about wholeness – of self (body/mind/spiritual), of sacrament (as we celebrate initiation during the Easter season), of liturgical plans (blending traditional and contemporary, old favorites and fun new pieces), etc. And while I recognize that not many people ponder Sacraments, and even fewer spend time thinking about liturgical plans, pretty much everyone I know has given some thought to wholeness of being. Who hasn't considered dropping a few pounds, or taking an art class, or trying to make more time in the day to spend with family?

We've written a lot about a holistic approach to wellness. (See our blog on [Holistically Nurturing Volunteers](#).) Consider the different parts of your life (work, family, exercise, prayer, recreation) like spokes on a bicycle tire. When one is out of whack, the tire still rolls. When several are not in balance, the bike tire is wobbly. When you're really out of balance (stressed, tense, physically and mentally spent), it's like trying to pedal a square tire.

Recently, both of our parishes have had reason to address wellness. At Bob's, they hosted a one-day Wellness Fair that included everything from healthy cooking demonstrations to yoga and tai chi classes. Their Wellness Ministry has grown to include walking classes and square dancing – and these regular events draw a crowd that is often different from the regular weekend mass folks. At my parish, we have recently offered training on operation of our defibrillator and a CPR class, both of which have been extremely well received. While we may advertise aggressively for various spiritual opportunities, such as a Bible study or holy hour, using our best skills with print and electronic media and pulpit announcements, attendance is rarely so many that we need to offer a second class or larger room. On the other hand, we have observed there is definite avid interest in wellness issues.

So what can we learn from this? Jesus reached out to people where they were. He didn't go to the fancy places where only the learned were; he sat in the grass and talked to the “regular folks” – the people like you and me. Perhaps we as a Church could take note. If we reach people where they



are, or address what concerns them right now, we can all grow together holistically. So if CPR and yoga classes are what brings them, we should do that well, and grow from there. As we tend to the physical and mental side, so too can we reach the spiritual side as parts of the whole.

As a parish leader, that should be a call to action. In our personal lives, perhaps it's food for thought. Where are you out of balance? What will help restore balance? Are there holes in your whole?

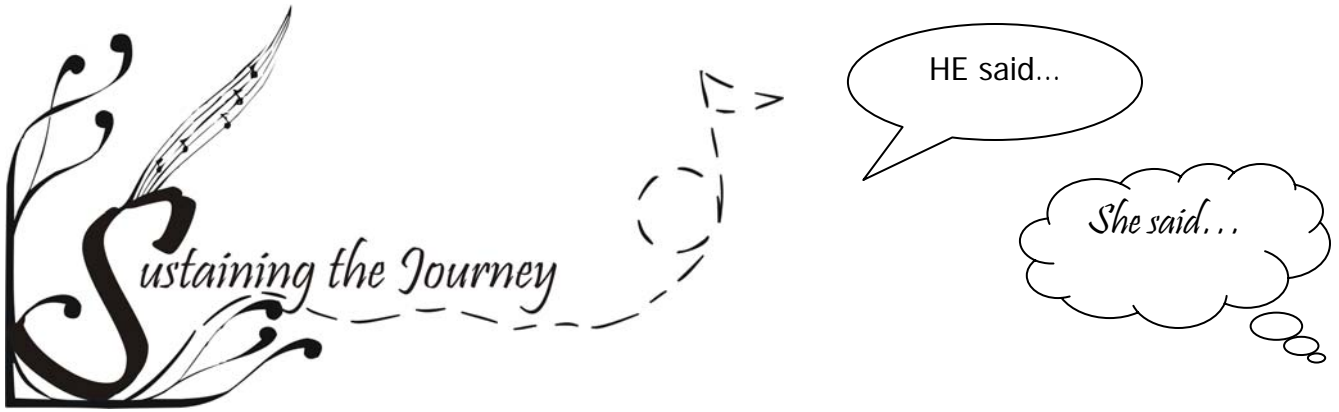
Bob's perspective:

My Grandmother was a task master. Because she and Grandpa lived across the street, I often spent time with them – and loved almost every minute with them. “Bobby, did you say your prayers this morning?” I really wanted to, but I didn't have time. “Have you practiced your penmanship today?” I was going to, but I didn't have time. “Did you clean your room today, young man?” I thought about it, but I didn't have time. “The road to hell is paved with good intentions!” If I had a nickel for every time my Grandmother said that to me, I'd have at least 1000 nickels! At the time I thought that was a pretty harsh thing to say, but in my later years I understand the point that she was trying to make. Generally speaking, it's better to do a little bit of something than a whole lot of nothing.

Many times, the “hole in our wholeness” isn't our intent, but rather our practice. Among other things, I instruct a course that I've designed called “Meditation in Motion,” which is a low impact exercise regiment combining elements of Tai Chi and Qigong. Most of my students are over the age of 60, and they tend to do relatively well. Why?

The most important concept is learning *how* to practice. As with any undertaking, the secret is to take a small step approach - creating small and easily attainable goals. Each small goal that is reached builds upon the next. For example, it may be difficult to find a half hour to practice. More often than not, mind-sets will conclude, “I don't have a half hour of time to practice today, so I won't,” in which case practice for the day goes by the wayside. However, everyone can find a few minutes. Ten minutes of practicing something is better than not practicing anything. In the long run, each short practice session will build upon the next. Eventually you'll reach your goal.

This concept can be applied to almost anything in life. “I don't have time for dinner, so I'll have to stop at McDonalds again.” Even if that's the case, eat one cheeseburger, a small order of fries and unsweetened ice tea instead of a Quarter-pounder (with cheese!), Supersize Fries and a Triple-thick



Chocolate Shake. “I don’t have time to practice piano repertoire today.” It only takes a few minutes to play the 12 major scales and 12 harmonic minor scales – which helps to build and maintain technique. “I don’t have time to walk 3 miles today.” Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Walk across the parking lot instead of driving. All the small steps build upon each other. “I don’t have time to pray the Office today.” How about taking an available moment to just say “Thank you?”

Granted, reaching a goal may take much longer with the small step approach. However one’s chance of reaching the goal increases immensely. Why? The practice of attaining small goals will develop and nurture invaluable habits that will continue to build and prosper. It is precisely those habits (discipline) that will fill the holes in your whole.