

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.

Turning Point

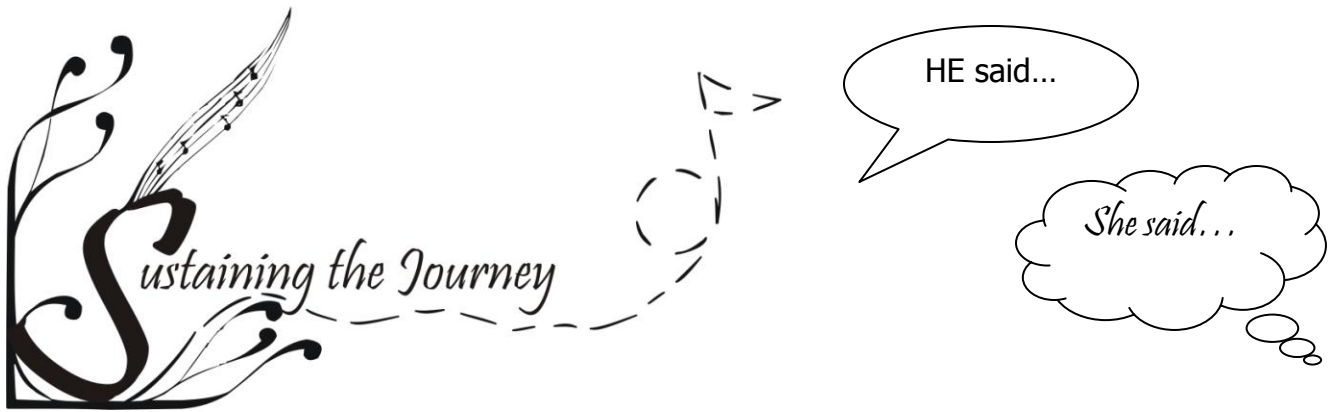
Mary's perspective:

I take four different freeways to get to my current parish. My first year, my choir gave me a GPS as a Christmas gift. I quickly became very familiar with that annoying voice that said "RECALCULATING!" (Insert sarcastic, nasal twang... Lord knows, I've heard it a lot!) Over the years, I've needed to recalculate - to change course. Sometimes, the re-direction has been imposed by factors outside of my control (hello? Four pastors in four years...), and sometimes it has been self-inflicted.

Bob and I recently were reflecting on turning points in our lives. The summer we formed *Sustaining the Journey* was definitely a turning point. It has changed the direction of our ministry, and of our lives. A few years ago, I decided to start walking in the park regularly, for exercise and stress relief. That was another turning point. The very act of recalculating, or evaluating our direction, by nature means we turn away from something in order to make a change. Leaving behind the comfortable or the expected can be challenging. Even when the new path is a positive change, it's still a movement away from our comfort zone.

For example, my decision to go walking at lunch meant that I had to change my eating habits and eliminate some of the social time I spent at work. While, at times, there was a sense that I was missing out on the office gossip, leaving the building made me re-think the amount of time I spent in my office. What did I do that was truly nourishing, and what did I do simply out of habit or inertia?

Bob's medical leave this summer posed a great turning point (although he may not completely agree!). It forced some conversations about what parts of his daily rituals were life-giving, and what were things he did just out of habit. The Labor Day weekend poses another natural turning point, with the return to routine and parish activities ramping up again. And so I revisit some of the questions that we reflected on in the beginning of summer (see our blog from June 1, 2017: [Empty Your Cup](#)). What expectations do we hold out of habit, inertia, or because "it's how I've always done it"? What parts of your day are fun, nourishing, and life-giving?



Before you get drawn back into the routine, now is an opportune time to reflect a bit. If you were to envision the best version of yourself, what new habits would you incorporate into your day? More prayer? Exercise? Regular artistic expression? (i.e., playing the piano, painting, crocheting, dance...) What parts would you let go? Gossip? Surfing the internet? How can you adjust what you do to be more efficient or life-giving? This one may take some thought, but be creative! For example, I have some documents that I prepare every week. Rather than take a little bit of time each week to write them, I found that I can take an afternoon and prepare six or eight weeks' worth - thus freeing up that time I used to spend each week. With this "found time", I choose to do something more in keeping with my best vision of myself. (Note that's not necessarily the same thing each week - sometimes it's playing the piano, sometimes it's a walk, sometimes it's spending quality time with a loved one. The point is to make good use of the time I used to spend doing the mundane.)

It's easy to get sucked into the routine, bouncing from one task to the next, often without much thought. At this turning point, the challenge is to be mindful. How will you recalculate?

Bob's perspective:

RECALCULATING!
RECALCULATING!
RECALCULATING!
RECALCULATING!

...Still working on "patience!"

(see our blog from August 15, 2017: [A Stroke of Good Fortune](#) ; Point #5)