



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.

Learning to Surrender

Mary and Bob's Perspective (written by Mary):

So here we are, Holy Week again... for many of us, this is the busiest time of year. From extra rehearsals to remembering which version of the blessing of water to use at the Easter Vigil, sometimes the actual execution of these holy services feels more like...well...an execution rather than a prayer experience!

Bob and Mary have experienced an extraordinary Lent. The day after Ash Wednesday, our pastor was diagnosed with leukemia. He passed away on February 29. Then on March 19, the mayor of our city (and a true man of faith) went home to God. When those ashes were placed on our foreheads less than 6 weeks ago, we had no idea we'd be playing the funerals of two of our larger-than-life friends - certainly not in the midst of preparing for Holy Week services. We typically send emails of encouragement, assuring you of our prayers. And we certainly do pray for you - for all who minister. We truly believe in the importance of caring for the care providers. But this time, we also want to share just a glimmer of what we are learning: surrender.

When it feels like all is lost, when darkness threatens to close in, and when our whole community has been shaken to its core, we are reminded of how much our faith sustains us. We recognize we are not in control - God is - and it's time to surrender to that. When you trust and believe, you remember that life is changed, not ended. When you surrender to the Almighty, you don't need to know it all...you just need to keep walking the journey.

And so our prayer for you this Holy Week is that you take the time to truly experience surrender. Sink into the prayer, the rituals, the faith story that we share. May it sustain you and nourish you.

From **Ken and Grace Enos:**

Like everyone that knew Fr. Stephen, he was a person that you enjoyed talking to and praying with. I first met Fr. Stephen at Lake West Hospital in 2010, when I had my heart attack. Fr. Stephen came in and gave me Holy Communion and prayed with me. Even though that was the first time I met him, I knew there was something special about him. A month later the week of Christmas, I was back at the hospital, suffering from two major strokes. Fr. Stephen came in again to see me, and asked don't I know you from some where? I told him that I was there on Thanksgiving week, and he had visited me then. We chatted for a while and he gave me Holy Communion.

I told my wife that Fr. Stephen was here today, and that he would make a wonderful Pastor if we were so lucky to get him. I prayed Christmas Eve, all night long, and the nursing staff was concerned because I was awake because of my condition. I told them that I was praying to God, so please leave me be. I was ready to go Home with our Lord that night. I was at peace, but I also asked the Lord if it is your will for me continue, let it be possible for me to do other



ministries later on. I also prayed, if it is Your will Lord, Fr. Stephen would make a wonderful Pastor at St. Mary Magdalene someday.

Two years later my prayers were answered. My friends, like you, it was very hard seeing him go, but Fr. Stephen left us all with a great message. To serve the church and one another. With Holy Week upon us, let us all renew our faith and look how we as children of God, and can help others do the same.

From **Kathy Stirling**:

God Bless you Mary and Bob. Want you to know I am here to help Sustain You for the Journey through this Holy Week

From **Bob Moncrief**:

Your message is very poignant and important. Thank you.

From **Fr. Dan Begin**:

Thanks for the great Easter message!