

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.

If You Do What You Always Did...

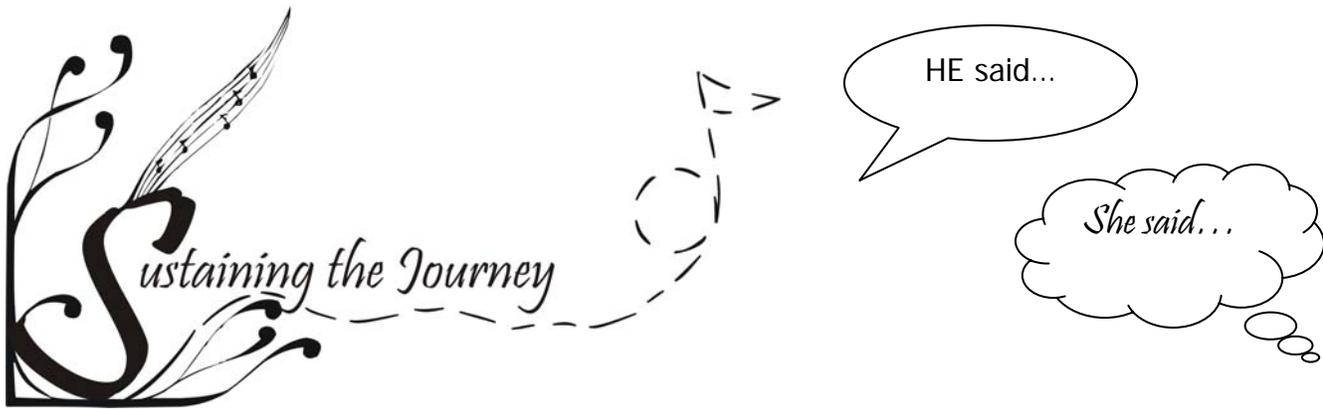
Bob's Perspective:

Many times we get so caught up in the **WAY** we do things, that we often forget exactly **WHY** we do them.

Case in point: many people go to church on Sunday, week in and week out. They go at the same time, park in the same place, walk in through the same door, sit in the same pew and say the same prayers. All of this becomes habit, which in itself is not a bad thing. Many people have much worse habits than going to church on a regular basis. But this particular habit becomes a problem when we forget why we're doing it. It becomes a problem when reverence and spirituality falls by the wayside in order to get church "out of the way" for the week. It becomes a problem when we receive Eucharist in a common place way, and not with forethought and preparedness - and then just walk out without so much as offering a prayer of thanksgiving. It is important to remember **WHO** we are and **WHOSE** we are.

This carries through to the way we interact with our families as well. Many families barely eat meals together - they cohabitate (that is, live in the same house) but beyond that, many family members - husbands and wives, brothers and sisters hardly know each other. Because of their individual habits (working long hours, being engaged in too many activities, etc.) they begin to drift apart from the people that are most important - each other.

So what's my point? If you do what you always did, you'll get what you always got! If we truly wish to grow in our faith life, in our relationship to God, and in relationship with our families and community, - we sometimes need to challenge ourselves as to how well we undertake that process. For example, is our prayer life fruitful or stagnant? In other words, do we fall into a rut and merely ramble through words, or do we truly take time to understand what we're saying. Do we take God for granted, or do we truly have a relationship of substance and meaning? Do we merely cohabitate with our families, or do we truly interact and know each other? If not, then maybe it's time to try something different, something out of the ordinary, in order to achieve these goals.



Maybe today is the day that we stop our busyness momentarily in order to spend some time with someone we've neglected. Maybe today is the day to mend a broken fence with an apology. Maybe today is the day to tell someone how much you really love them - or show them with some kind word or deed. Maybe today is the day....

Mary's Perspective:

We have a priest friend who often concludes his funeral homilies with the following thoughts:

With today's busy lives, we can get caught up in moving from one task to the next, and it's moments such as the loss of a loved one when we take pause and think. How are the relationships in your life? Do the people who are special to you know that you love them? Who do you owe an apology to, or who should you accept one from? If the Lord were to call you home today, would you be ready?

I first heard him say that nearly twenty years ago, and I haven't forgotten. It made me mindful of telling those I care about that they are important and valued - and I try to do that regularly.

Our lives are filled with rituals, which help reinforce good things. For example, most people have a morning ritual that may include a shower, teeth brushing, a cup of coffee, and perhaps a prayer of gratitude for waking up to take another breath. Liturgy is certainly rich with ritual. Even the season of Lent has rituals of fasting, penitence, and almsgiving.

They say the definition of insanity is doing what you've always done, yet expecting different results. If we simply go through the motions, what does the ritual reinforce? If we are not mindful, how are we transformed?