

Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth
Leaven Assembly
July 31, 2018

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We are in a crisis. I'm not referring to the financial status of the community nor of any serious communal concerns. Our crisis is much more subtle, the type that slowly erodes and sometimes seems easy to ignore. Our crisis, if we don't heed it, will lead us into stagnation and draw us into being focused solely upon ourselves.

"Our essential mission is to witness and share the mission of Jesus who calls us to love God with **our whole hearts** and to love our neighbor even as God loves us." This is profound....it is a calling, an honor and a duty. It is challenging us to be prophetic witnesses. Speaking when we don't want to speak. Compelling us to live in the present- the now. Prophetic witness is living from a contemplative stance; allowing our hearts to befriend all that is within us, which includes suffering, vulnerability and fear. Being prophetic witness is **being** visible Gospel women – "living and planning at the frontier between deep internal experience and the revelations of the outer world." (We just reflected on this in David Whyte's poem "Considering Our Future Together".)

"I look around the world and see a variety of Christians but very little of Jesus. Oh sure, a helping hand here and there, a smile or a gesture of kindness, but not a Jesus who was daring, startling with questions, on fire with the love of God. Do we really think Jesus would be watching television while innocent children are being ripped from their parents' arms? Would we find Jesus in the shopping malls while innocent men, women, and children are starving in war-torn areas... [or being tortured and killed in Nicaragua because they've chosen to stand up and speak for what is just?] Would Jesus live in a McMansion while men and women are forced to live on the streets due to loss of jobs and homes? [Would Jesus be concerned about what he was going to eat tonight when persons are dying from drought stricken areas or flooded fields?] Who are we kidding? We are no more Christian than the best of atheists.... Where your treasure is, there your heart lies". Jesus wanted a new type of person, one who would be ready to sacrifice her life by living freely and fully in the power of divine love." *

How are these thoughts, from Ilia Delio, relevant to us? Relevant to our mission? Or are they relevant?

The Paschal Mystery is ours....all of it. Over and over, every nanosecond, we are inundated with God's powerful loving energy. How do we open ourselves to this love? And how do we help others to do so? Many times it is difficult. For me, at least, I allow fear to be front and center. We know that opening oneself to God's love, and all that is packaged within it, requires surrender of the well-worn patterns that we are comfortable in. It implies letting go of MY ideas and judgments. It promises grief and letting go of what we hold dear: friends/those we look to for wisdom and support, comfort, a recognized accepted way of life – as we try to ignore the vulnerability that is knocking on our door. Opening oneself to this love asks us to let go of the presence of the past that we sometimes like to 'live in'. This love also promises peace, unbelievable joy and an aliveness to die for – literally!!

"On the third day of Creation, just before all forms of life were about to multiply, the Holy One said to all of the creatures:

I see that what some of you treasure most is survival, while what others yearn for most is living freely and fully. So I will give you each a choice. If what you want most is stability, then I will give you the power to regenerate any part you lose, but you must stay rooted where you are. If, on the other hand, you prefer unbelievable joy and aliveness, you also may have your wish, but you will be more at risk because I will not give you the ability to regain your previous form."
(adaptation- source unknown)

Sing: 'Eye Has Not Seen' (Marty Haugen)

What is the vulnerability that is knocking on **our** door?

*To read the full reflection by Ilia Delio, click on the attachment 'Omega Conference 2018' which is included in this email.



THE OMEGA CENTER

Conference 2018

In the synoptic Gospels Jesus of Nazareth challenges his followers with a startling question: “Who do people say that I am?” Scholars throughout the centuries have addressed this question in a variety of ways, providing all sorts of answers which have led to the formation of dogma and doctrine. But the fact is, Jesus was not looking for a logical answer but an existential response: “Who do *you* say that I am?” he later asks. Jesus’ question is meant to remain just that, a question. The answer is to be given in the shape of our lives: our yearnings and hopes, choices and loves.

We have made a huge mistake in placing the whole universe on Jesus’ shoulders. Rather, all that the universe is capable of is found in Jesus’ response to Abba. Jesus is the great “yes” to God’s all-embracing love. This is what the ‘hypostatic union’ means, Karl Rahner claimed. Saying “yes” to the divine energies of love means to accept God’s gracious gifts of sun, moon, stars, plants, other planets, trees and rocks, rich and poor, atheists and all religions, people of every language, race and nation. To say “yes” is to respond in love: the good that is me is shared with the good that is you and together we are part of the sacred good of divine love and are called to build a world together in love.

I look around the world and see a variety of Christians but very little of Jesus. Oh sure, a helping hand here and there, a smile or a gesture of kindness, but not a Jesus who was daring, startling with questions, on fire with the love of God. Do we really think Jesus would be watching television while innocent children are being ripped from their parents’ arms? Would we find Jesus in the shopping malls while innocent men, women and children are starving in war-torn areas or fleeing from the violence of extremists? Would Jesus live in a McMansion while men and women are forced to live on the streets due to loss of jobs and homes? Who are we kidding? We are no more Christian than the best of atheists. It is rather unfortunate that we say a few prayers and go to Church on Sunday because it almost seems like bona fide religion. But I don’t think Jesus would have cared much for ritual or the duty of religion: “Where your treasure is, there your heart lies” he said. Jesus wanted a new type of person, one who would be ready to sacrifice his/her life by living freely and fully in the power of divine love.

Our God has become too small, Teilhard de Chardin lamented, too puny. The immensity of the universe and its fantastic life of stars, planets and galaxies can either make us feel insecure and pointless or filled with wonder. Teilhard put his life on the line by drawing our attention to the new contours of the universe, a dynamic evolution where change and complexity are integral to new life. God is not only doing new things, but God is becoming new. Our lives make a difference to God. That is why the insight of Eric Jantsch is consonant with the vision of Jesus. He wrote: “To live with an evolutionary spirit is to let go when the right time comes and to engage new

structures of relationship.” Are we free enough to let go and to engage new structures of relationship?

The Omega Center 2018 conference in Kansas is a breakthrough conference. The old is passing away and something new is on the horizon. But what is this “new on the horizon?” We are the new—the shape of our lives. We will engage Teilhard’s vision, how he saw a new type of person emerging, how religion must be liberated from the institution and inserted back into the cosmos, and how the present moment is opening up to a whole new future. It is time to learn how to harness the energies of love and discover fire for the second time.

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