

## Fr. Greg's Meditation ...

3rd November 2019

Over the last 15 years my life and thinking have changed.

This journey has been challenging, rewarding, and life giving. There have been twists and turns that I would never have predicted. There have been dark valleys and even more stunning new vistas. Fundamentally it's been a Holy Spirit led walk into a deeper understanding and participation in what Grace really is. What a blessing it's been! WOW.

"I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete" *John 15:11*.

Last Friday, in Richard Rohr's daily meditation, there was a very interesting thought prompter. I'd like to share it with you, not because I want to convert you to my way of thinking, but because I'd like you to pray it through. I'd like you to dive deeper into the scriptures and your relationship with The Divine. *Rather than be defensive I'd like you to be curious.* Fundamentally, we need to interpret the scriptures in the light of accumulated wisdom, rational thinking, discovered truth, in the context of a living and worshiping faith and faith community. This is God's mission to the lost, and a world, that to me, seems to be heading for a cliff. Here it is...

**"Hospitality is the practice that keeps the church from becoming a club, a members-only society. — Diana Butler Bass**

**Richard Rohr ... "Practical, practice-based Christianity has been avoided, denied, minimized, ignored, delayed, and sidelined for too many centuries, by too many Christians who were never told Christianity was anything more than a belonging or belief system. And we only belonged to our own little club or denomination at that! Some of us were afraid to step foot into a house of worship across the street for fear of eternal punishment. Now we know that there is no Methodist or Catholic way of loving. There is no Orthodox or Presbyterian way of living a simple and nonviolent life. There is no Lutheran or Evangelical way of showing mercy. There is no Baptist or Episcopalian way of visiting the imprisoned. If there is, we are invariably emphasizing the accidentals, which distract us from the very "marrow of the Gospel," as St. Francis called it. We have made this mistake for too long. We cannot keep avoiding what Jesus actually emphasized and mandated. In this most urgent time, "it is the very love of Christ that now urges us" (2 Corinthians 5:14).**

Quaker pastor Philip Gulley superbly summarizes how we must rebuild spirituality from the bottom up in his book, 'If the Church Were Christian'. Here I take the liberty of using my own words to restate his message, which offers a rather excellent description of what is emerging in Christianity today:

1. **Jesus is a model for living more than an object of worship.**
2. **Affirming people's potential is more important than reminding them of their brokenness.**
3. **The work of reconciliation should be valued over making judgments.**
4. **Gracious behaviour is more important than right belief.**
5. **Inviting questions is more valuable than supplying answers.**
6. **Encouraging the personal search is more important than group uniformity.**
7. **Meeting actual needs is more important than maintaining institutions.**
8. **Peacemaking is more important than power.**
9. **We should care more about love and less about sex.**

**Life in this world is more important than the afterlife (Eternity is God's work anyway)."**

I quote the above because I admire The Quakers a lot. There is a lot to think and pray through.

I do hope and pray you will have a Holy Curiosity.

I pray that we will all listen twice as much as we talk. ... The Parable of the Ears and Mouth.

I pray all people will be on a journey towards a deeper commitment to Grace and God's community (the church), messy and difficult as it always, has been, and always will be.

Lots of love and prayers for a courageous journey In Christ.

Greg