

A REFLECTION ON THE QUESTION: HOW DO I “DO LIFE?”

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Everyone is called, and every calling has something to do with how we relate to others in this world; a calling, by definition, is expository inasmuch as it reveals the metaphors we use to “do life” together. Not *life* in terms of abstract theories, but *life* relative to the faith-fueled, faith-full doing of real, day-to-day activities. Reality, for me, is only comprehended relationally, only lived trustingly, clinging “for life” to God’s promises not as a vaporous metaphor, nor as theological truisms protected from intersections of unimaginable pain, but as multifaceted metaphors of grace that resist any capture, survive any desperation, out-think any dissuasion, outlive any sadness, any death, with the resurrection’s outburst of joy. No matter what you’re going through, this thing comes from somewhere deep inside you, to carry you through. That’s what vocation is, like an unconscious, governing force that is both your compass and your compulsion.

I believe all people can discover their vocation if they probe for an answer to the question: What brings me joy? What makes time pass without feeling like a second has elapsed? What redeems my path through the mundane “day-to-dayness” of existence? What set of thoughts or feelings connect me to the entire human community, past, present and future? As I understand it, this derives from the Holy Spirit who guides my decisions: *from* how I plunge into forgiveness extended to my enemy, even one who doesn’t desire reconciliation *to* when I decide to give away anything that’s keeping me from God, depriving me of Life.

I love poetry and the poet I love most is that exilic postcolonial, Derek Walcott. He says: “No metaphor, no metamorphosis.” In other words, without a metaphor, without a compelling and constitutive framework for life, opportunities of transformation in my own life are obscured, and the reconciliation so desperately needed in a fractured human community is made more difficult. My metaphor—guiding me like an icon to the divine—is transformation. I am especially animated by the experience of learning from others as they reflect on their journeys of faith.

Of course, I aim to be a partner with the Spirit in this work of on-going creativity. I rarely miss a chance to stir pots, rattle cages, nudge “stick-in-the-muds,” or bug those who need to be bugged with constructive, provocative questions until their inwardly-curved selves and self serving systems turn outward and move toward a more ascendant mode. But that’s just me. That’s not necessarily your vocation. Ascension marks the culmination of Christ’s earthly vocation. It radiates as a highpoint in the mystical, divinization of humanity—*mystical*, because in this ascension there is no sacrifice of what it means to be totally human. This is, for me, the character of my calling: a deep, intellectual and spiritual encounter with the *other*, as deliberately we venture into new and unknown arenas, filled with the surprise of God’s gift of our common humanity. Life, after all, must be *done*, and this is how I *do* life.