

February 8, 2009

Reflection from John Surette, SJ

Life's Adventure and Hope

Some people see the glass as half empty while others see it as half full. In our first reading this morning (Job 7:1-7) we encounter Job who sees it as half empty and even worse.

Crushed by the tribulations of his own situation and the tribulations of others, Job laments the harshness of life. He complains: "Are not our lives on Earth a drudgery?" He then turns to the lack of meaning in his own life: "I have been assigned months of misery, and troubled nights have been allotted to me." And he continues: "My life is like the wind; I shall not see happiness again." Job sees little or no meaning in the life that has been given to him. It is filled with pain, with grief, with desolation.

Perhaps many of us in the chapel this morning, with our years of life experience, can remember times when we were able to identify with Job to some extent at least.

If we look upon life as a situation in which we are caught up without having



any voice in the matter, a situation that is static and basically unchanging, a situation in which we are more or less imprisoned and are called upon to make the best we can of our fears, our failures, our sorrows, our sufferings, our disappointments, with our only hope being that our future

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situation, our next life, will be better... if we look upon life in these ways, then we can certainly identify with Job.

On the other hand, if we look upon life as an adventure into which we have been invited, an adventure that is an unfolding event, an adventure that involves continual change, an adventure in which we are free to participate fully or not and are called upon not only to make the best of our fears, failures, sorrows, sufferings, disappointments but also to celebrate our hopes, successes, joys, and loves...if we look upon life as such an adventure, then certainly the Job that we find in today's reading cannot be a role model for us.

Job is without hope as he goes on to say: "Remember that my life is like the wind; I shall not see happiness again." Hope has no place on his radar screen. He finds no hope

An adventure, on the other hand, is a journey filled with hope. No one starts out upon or continues on in an adventure without the hope that it will result in some benefit, some enrichment, some abundance or satisfaction. There can be no adventure without the presence of some hope for these kinds of outcomes.

Consider God's Universe within which we live out our life adventures. We find a Universe that from its beginning billions of years ago has been filled with the Divine creative energy. Imagine billions of years of creativity unfolding galaxies, stars, planets, mountains, rivers, prairies, lakes, plants, animals, and us humans.

Yes, us humans...that same Divine creative energy flows within you and me at this very moment. It is available to us at each and every moment of our life adventures if we choose to activate it and become co-creators. Is this not reason for us to hope?

Consider God's Universe within which we live out our life adventures. We find a Universe that is itself an adventure. Its fourteen billion year story is a story of

challenges, excitements, sufferings, and dyings. The sufferings, however, usually result in something new. The dyings usually result in risings.

For example: the forest burns but the following year all kinds of new life emerge and this always happens. Another example: at your most recent meal some life-forms suffered the relinquishment of their lives so that you could eat them and experience more abundant life for yourself and this always happens. A third example: parents suffer the setting aside of their own needs so as to attend the needs of their children whom they love and this always happens. Is this sort of dynamic that permeates God's Universe and therefore our personal lives not reason for you and I to hope?

May we say good by to Job-like moments in our lives and may we embrace moments of hope!

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