

Cycle 3 A New Vision

Introduction

Welcome back or if you've just joined the study, please, come in and make yourself comfortable. So far our continuing journey of transformation along the Good News Road has taken us from the very beginning of the creation through the wilderness, into the slow pace of not being where we were or where we are going. In this third section of our study, we will be exploring stories and accounts of transformation, some of the many ways God is active in our lives through Jesus and those who follow him. However, when we get to the end of this segment, you will still be on the journey. As a poem at the end of *Tolkien's* *Hobbit* puts it, *The road goes ever ever on....* The Good news journey began long before us and will go on long after us. As finite creatures we live here and now and have a small piece of the much larger journey to which God calls all of us.

If there is a word that describes the journey for me, it is "*hope*". Recently I was part of a conference call with a group of people who are starting to plan events for next year. It was exciting to explore ideas and options about how to take the next step on this journey to which we believe God is calling all of us. The word that has traveled with me as I see persons and congregations seeking to be faithful in this time and place is "hope." Just as so many of those before us have often traveled in faith trusting God to lead them even when they couldn't see the road ahead or be certain about what would happen next, so it is that we to are called to make the journey of transformation with faith and hope, trusting God's love for us as we've experienced it in Christ and in other people.

As I worked on the beginning of this section, a friend in California, sent me something which seemed to fit with our journey. He is reading a book, *The Psalms: Meditations for Every Day of the Year* by Joan Chittister, OSB, one of my favorite writers. This is the quote he had picked up for the day. *"The problem is that we always think of hope as grounded in the future. Wrong. Hope is always grounded in the past. Hope simply challenges us to remember, always that we have survived everything in life to this point-and in even better shape often than we were when our troubles began. So why not this situation too? Hope. You have no reason not to.*

Our journey will carry us into the future and the past helps us on our way. Even the earliest scriptures we are exploring in this study are nearly 2000 years old. Century after century Christians have turned to the Bible and discovered new insights, greater clarity and numerous gifts from God which have helped them

continue their journey as faithful witnesses to the Good News of God as seen in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Among the many resources which have guided my own journey is a little book of prayers, *Letters to Jesus*, by Juan Marcos Rivera, a pastor and Disciple missionary from Puerto Rico to Argentina. In addition to his years in Argentina he carried a passion for and worked on behalf of the people of Latin America. While for many years I had only heard of him and never had the opportunity to meet him, his prayers have blessed and continue to bless my own journey. Each prayer begins, *Ay bendito Jesus*, a Puerto Rican phrase which literally translated means, O blessed Jesus. The translation carries none of the richness of the meaning so it seems best left in Spanish. The prayers all end with the phrase, *“And we’ll see each other around, Lord, on the road.”* This is a small excerpt from one and it seems to be a good place to pick up our journey.

Ay Bendito, Jesus. *I am convinced that the gospel is neither a travel agency for some heavenly destination, nor preparation to face death as the final destiny of the human being... I prefer the Gospel of the road, with all its intersections and turns. It is the road that has rest stops so that one can admire the landscape in moments of reflection. It is the road along which travel living people, who sometimes leave things, indicating their presence. It is the road that is made by walking it. It is the road that you travel, even if there is no fixed stopping place. It is the road of the eternal suffering of your own tribulations, the road of your hopes and expectations, your road, Jesus.*

I prefer the gospel that guides me to repentance and to faith, that transforms my life, and places me in relationship with my brothers and sisters, that lets me feel their own condition as unemployed, that lets me accept the rebelliousness of their children, daily exposed to vice and crime...

I prefer the gospel that allows me to seek the things on high, and to notice the broken roof on my neighbor’s house, to notice that others need bread and that their children cannot go to school... I prefer the gospel that discovers that hell is not the destiny of our creation.

Help me, Jesus, live the gospel that redeems, that consoles, that guarantees abundant life in you and for you. I want to live the life that endures, both in time and in eternity. May I be able to endow my children with it as a treasure from God. And, as God lives, I shall one day be able to do so.

Until then, we’ll see each other around, Lord, on the road.