**Ministerial Meandering**

People are fearful of trust. Trusting makes us feel edgy, vulnerable, and suspicious. Why? For good reason - we have been let down too many times and don’t want to risk being let down again.

Look at your friends; are there not some who have been wronged in love at some point? They have decided that love is ‘for the birds’ - ‘**I’m** not going to get hurt again!’ - so they build an emotional wall of steel around themselves, and retreat from life. How sad - another example of ‘la vie manquée’

These folks may be the nicest and sweetest in the world, but they are dying inside, every day a little bit more when they remember what could have been - but they now absolutely deny themselves. These people will do anything for you - may be incredibly generous… but just you try and get close to them and find out what makes them tick…the drawbridge goes up, the portcullis comes down with a clang that rattles your teeth, and the door you thought might be opening just a crack is both literally and emotionally slammed in your face.

I can see several of these scared and unfulfilled characters as I look around the parish, and my heart aches to set them free from their self-inflicted prisons and misery. But I can’t help anyone who doesn’t want to help themselves. Jesus used to ask - as he did of Blind Bartimaeus in last week’s gospel - “What is it that you want me to do for you?”

As I said in my sermon, Jesus **asks** - he doesn’t demand; he doesn’t kick your door down and **tell** you that he’s going to make you well. As Revelation 3:20 tells us, ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock…’

This Sunday (All Saint’s Sunday) we are having an adult baptism. The candidate has decided that she wants to be a full member of the Christian family, and baptism is a first step along that exciting road. It is our job to help her - not to bully her, but support and encourage her - realizing at the same time that she must move at her own pace with the Lord.

The importance and relevance of my bringing these two topics together is that while one person is responding to the offer of Jesus to come to the waters of baptism to leave all her past life behind and start afresh, others of you out there - some who zoom and others who even come to church - are still shut up in your private cocoons of sadness and loneliness, and frightened to step out in case you are hurt again.

I’m not suggesting that you all start racing around looking for another partner - that could be a little scary for all of us! - but *giving* of yourself more - to let others a little closer to the core of what makes you, YOU - is such a rich gift to give, and one which Jesus constantly gave.

Jesus had to trust, even though he knew that he was going to be let down; it was part of his mission - to show us that although it is costly, and although it is going to hurt - it is necessary to live a fulfilled life.

He may have died in his prime - but he lived the fullest life imaginable in the three years of his ministry - and I would suggest that had he lived to an old age prior to his arrest and crucifixion, he would not have made the impact on the world that he did. It is not the years of your life that matter, but the life in your years.

We all fall off our horse or bike (camel, warthog, *whatever*), and the only way we are ever going to be able to ride again is to get back in the saddle. I’m sure you have all seen ‘The Horse Whisperer’ and had a little *‘frisson’* over Robert Redford - but the story is not really a romance but a lesson in trust. The horse needs to trust humans again, the girl needs to trust the horse again, she also needs to trust Redford, (as does the horse), and the painful game of love and *almost* trust that goes on between the woman and Redford is also a lesson in allowing people close and believing. Everyone (and the horse) goes away at the end of the movie having learned how to give more of themselves and trust.

So I call to you, you who have incarcerated yourselves in D-I-Y dungeons, and are frightened of revealing your feelings - even to yourselves - bring that pain and fear and broken heart to the cross and leave it there. God binds up the broken-hearted and soothes their wounds (Psalm 147:3).

You who have already been baptized should know that, so come and support our newest family member this Sunday as she lays down her rubbish and starts a new life in Christ.

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