
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

September 20, 2015

The Responsible Exercise of Faith

“Then Jesus went into the temple and threw out all those who were selling and buying there. He pushed over the tables used for currency exchange and the chairs of those who sold doves. He said to them, ‘It’s written, My house will be called a house of prayer. But you’ve made it a hideout for crooks.’”
Matthew 21:12-13 (Common English Bible)

Recently, a presidential candidate was critical of the pope’s comments on climate change. The candidate asserts that science should be left in the hands of scientists and that the pope should focus on theology and morality. What is comical about his remarks is that, as a Roman Catholic himself, he fails to grasp that caring for creation and climate change is within the realm of theology and morality. The Christian tradition is built upon God’s first vocation for us to be gardeners that protect, care for and sustain God’s good creation.

Certainly, there isn’t consensus on the topic of climate change nor do I pretend to resolve that issue here. What is clear from this scripture from Matthew’s Gospel is that nothing is outside of the realm of God’s concern – climate change, business and economics, and personal morality – and that the church is called to speak on every issue that impacts God’s creation and how we treat one another. It simply cannot be ignored that in this passage, Jesus “concerns himself” with business and commerce.

There is no getting away with the fact that much of what harms our earth and creates economic disparity among people is permitted because God’s people have never placed the inequity of it all on their conscience. It is fashionable to be tolerant, some may say. While many would agree that tolerance is a virtue it should never be confused with apathy or indifference, which is vice. There are evils in this world that demand for God’s people to speak, “These things should not be!”

The responsible exercise of the Christian faith calls for men and women to make it their business to care for God’s earth and to create a community where people experience a political and economic climate that is humane and just, sound and wholesome. Because people differ on how that might be done – thus different political parties – our behavior toward one another must be exercised with civility and humility. Nonetheless, the world that God intends requires people who are sensitive in conscience, discerning of God’s movement and militant in action.

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