

Enkindling Hope

‘A person’s resurrection is no personal privilege for himself alone. It contains within itself hope for all, hope for everything.’ Dorothy Soelle

Like you, I tend to fear what may come out of my mouth in ‘polite’ society. A fire burns in me constantly that longs to enkindle the hope of transformation for anyone serious about Jesus Christ. Good news yes, and scandalous too.

While at a well-heeled Christmas party with new neighbors last week, the subject of a particular Catholic theologian—Richard Rohr-- came up. Rohr lost my respect a while back when he shifted his anthropology and began to recognize the ‘LGBT’ set as an ethnic group in need of rights rather than repentance unto the transforming love of Christ Jesus.

This theologian has now unwittingly blocked the way for men and women to open themselves to the new life Jesus has for them. Instead, his worldly thinking limits them to sexualizing their own gender, a direction that forever frustrates God’s will for their good lives.

In a flash, I thought of all the young women and men with same-sex attraction whose aspiration to walk in chastity is hindered by churchmen like Rohr who have become worldly in their thinking. The path of a generation needs to be cleared! We remove the weeds through the fire of truth, spoken in love. When well-aimed and timed, such fire enkindles hope for a life that surpasses ‘gay love.’

Fire burned in me. Amid the tinkling of wine glasses and well-tailored holiday wear, I knew that I had to basically undress and tell the whole truth of what Jesus can do for persons like me. I gently broke into the conversation and said that while I appreciated much of Rohr’s work, ‘I fear he is blocking the way for a generation to know the truth that can set them free.’

The woman, a college professor, interrupted me with some bogus worldly wisdom—‘Since the beginning of time, there has been the same % of gays everywhere on the planet...’ I quietly refuted her (such data does not exist) then redirected the conversation back to the truth of the Gospel—‘Jesus opens a door that cannot be shut for persons who knock for a way out of homosexuality and this is how He did so for me...’ Because my tone was respectful and my content deeply personal, she listened and left with ‘I see this now in a whole new light.’

That light is nothing less than the Gospel, which will remain hidden toward persons who will perish (2Cor. 4:3) unless people like you and me enkindle hope with the truth Jesus has entrusted to us.

Theologian Karl Barth says it best: ‘Something often flames up in our soul that we would like to call out to all people—a question, a complaint, a word of defiance, a rejoicing, a stark truth—something of a sort that a person cannot keep to himself once it is there...It saddens us to see people coming and going, all in so much dullness and error when we have something to tell them that would help

them...Our talk is such a wooden, dead talk. Fire will not break out in it, but can only smolder in our words...Whatever does not grow out of God produces smoke, not fire. But that which is born of God overcomes the world (1JN 5:4). We need only to speak with our fellows on the basis of faith. As long as our words do not arise out of faith in God's power, we will remain mute. Only faith can speak. But faith can speak! Our ears must be opened then our mouths.'