

The Disappearing Path

“Jesus said to His disciples: ‘I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!’ ” (Luke 12: 49)



That God created humanity to be good gifts for each other, grateful for the other's difference and committed to offering one's body to him or her only as a lifetime pledge of allegiance, is a path disappearing on the earth.

Instead we celebrate 'gay marriage' and forego real marriage; we criminalize teens who seek to grow beyond their homosexuality but advocate for a child's right to determine his or her own gender and have as much 'consequence-free' sex as (s)he wants by legalizing over-the-counter contraceptives.

We champion the demonized and demonize those in search of deliverance.

The church tends to look on such trends naively, as if the separation between church and state protects the holy. But the emergence of GLBTQ 'advocacy' groups in orthodox Christian campuses and congregations across the USA suggest something else. We whom Jesus entrusted with the path to clarity and purity in our sexual humanity have become deceived. The path to life is disappearing among the faithful, overgrown with ideas and sentiments alien to Jesus Himself.

Only the blazing fire of love from the lips of those who know better can clear that path. I think of Mike and Diane who almost lost their marriage to sexual sin and who through the powerful grace of the church, reclaimed their dignity and fidelity. They tell the truth of their sin and redemption and raze weeds from the path.

I think of 21-year-old Kim who became aware of same-sex attraction early on and acted accordingly. Jesus and His friends fought for her best and gave her vision beyond a lesbian destiny. Her testimony floored me: 'As I have engaged with all the resources God has given me

through members of His body, my needs have changed. My desires have changed. God does so much more than free us from sin. He is restoring my beauty and dignity as a woman made in His image.'

The beauty of her words shames the band-aid we put on 'gay' youth by fashioning their vulnerability into an identity, a shaky foundation at least. The only sure ground is the Creator and Redeemer of all who longs to restore our broken humanity. The language of Kim's life burns a path for others to behold that ground. It is holy ground, and yet wholly available for all who seek Him.

Last week in Detroit, my friend Dean preached a fiery Gospel. He told the story of his return to his conservative parents, both pastors, who welcomed their HIV-positive son home. Dean testified to living honestly in the light of Love's community: how trustworthy members of Christ help burn off shame and the anxiety that drives holy ones into the shadows. Dean's words cleared the path for anxious parents and struggling sons and daughters. They welcomed the blazing love of God, beheld the path once more, and resolved to walk it with renewed strength.

'A gospel that does not unsettle, a Word of God that does not get under anyone's skin, a Word of God that does not touch the real sin of society in which it is being proclaimed, what gospel is that?' - Bishop Oscar Romero