

"THE COMPLACENCY CONUNDRUM"

It's not "It is what it is", it's "It is what we make it"

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way - in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only."

So begins the classic novel "A Tale of Two Cities" (1859) by the English writer Charles Dickens (1812-1870). In this work of historical fiction, Dickens brought to light the social stratification and injustice of Victorian society as exemplified by contrasts and comparisons between London and Paris during the tumultuous environment of the French Revolution.

Every period of human history has its own unique set of challenges. In contrast to Dickens' time, today, we face issues of: international terrorism, nuclear weapon proliferation, the refugee crisis, gun violence and the opiate abuse epidemic. Examples of social injustice still exist, but whereas in Dickens' era they were largely concealed and ignored, today they receive almost instant attention with the prevalence of online media.

Unfortunately, mainstream society's current reaction to social injustice is all too often one of complacency, apathy, disinterest, indifference and lack of concern.

Today, we often hear the phrase "It is what it is". The phrase abdicates responsibility, shuts down creative problem solving, and concedes defeat. The danger of the phrase is that it all too often becomes the accepted mindset.

In contrast, the phrase "It is what we make it" connotes taking responsibility, learning from lessons of the past, and moving on to create innovative solutions. Notice the implicit collaboration in this phrase - "we" join together with our collective knowledge and experience to shape the future.

As a stewardship parish of people ever striving to be authentic disciples of Jesus Christ, we are invited to share our particular God given gifts of time, talent and treasure in service to others in the spirit of the New Evangelization and the current Jubilee Year of Mercy.

God's universal gift to all people of a free will allows everyone to individually choose how they will use, or not use, their gifts of time, talent and treasure. Each one of us has a personal vocation and mission in carrying out the divine plan. We are called to actively proclaim the Good News of Salvation, to actively heal the afflicted, and to actively care for one's brothers and sisters.

Stewardship enables us to discern our personal vocation in direct relationship to the individual, particular set of gifts given to us. It helps us to identify our particular mission as an active, committed, dedicated and effective co-worker in building the Kingdom of God.

The time for complacency and passivity has passed.

It's no longer "It is what it is", it's now "It is what we make it".

Ed Sampson
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