

Copy 294

Marilyn Crocker L.D. #6 Vocationalizing The Secular 7/4/74

...in three ways, ~~and this morning will again talk about one of those~~
three ways. It has to do with witnessing ^{to} the word or witnessing love, creating the structures of

~~justice or justing love, and then the third or presencing love. And yesterday we began to deal~~
~~with the whole dimension of justing love, which has to do with, very practically for me, with~~

~~sociologically re-doing the world, or sociologically re-creating, calling forth the greatness of~~
~~the world. And I suppose, if you wanted to give another title to what I'm going to talk about~~

~~a little this morning maybe something like 'Vocationalizing the Secular' would hold, that which we're~~
~~going to deal with.~~

I guess I was about four years old, when I can remember becoming conscious of the fact that my family
had given me the nickname ^{Mary} Mary Sunshine. Now its understandable that anyone who believed fully in the
words of that song that tells you to grab your coat and get your hat and walk down the sunny side of
the street and found that her whole life was spent walking on the sunny side of the street, its under-

and hot fudge sundaes always with peppermint stick ice cream and straight A's in school. And then

with the

as I grew older/things like a rewarding career, and a fine husband, and a perfect marriage and

two blonde haired blue-eyed twin boys, ^{many} made friends, and ~~made~~ more colleagues in the mission of the church.

And one day it all collapsed on me. I guess I knew that it had been crumbling ~~xxxxx~~ for a long time,

but I hadn't wanted to know what I knew. I had, having been raised in New England, and ~~having~~ been

taught to be persevering, I had held tenaciously to the vestigial remnants of my illusion, hoping that that

my illusion was really reality. I could point to a lot of events that contributed in triggering what

for me has been a profound consciousness. And it's strange. Those events are strange, or that combination

of events is strange because they're all so ordinary. ~~There~~ They're like those things that Groucho Marx

guess

used to have you ~~set~~ in that game, you know, way back in the early days of TV. Those five or six letter

words, that are common ordinary things that you have around the house all the time -- those kinds of events.

And yet through those ordinary events I came to see things in a brand new way.

One of those was the ordinary event of driving into a gas station one night to fill up an empty tank.

forty five minutes - that was nothing. So I waited my forty-five minutes and inched my way up to the tank. And/when I got/there I realized ~~there~~ ^{that} was a sign ~~indicating~~ ^{that} indicated that the maximum was one

dollar's worth, not the minimum but the maximum. And I panicked inside, because that there were no other gas stations on my route ~~before~~ ^{other side of the} I got to the/George Washington bridge, and one dollar's worth would

Walked up to the window

never get me there. And so I ~~ask~~ ^{asked} the attendant to receive his one dollar and the hose was still in the

please have

~~back of the~~ ^{you} tank, I asked him if it would be possible to ~~receive~~ ^{pay} two or three dollar's worth, so that I might get home on that late and cold night. And he leaned over to me and he said, "What's it worth to you, lady?"

I suddenly realized that I was being asked to become a victim of a situation of extortion. And I became angry.

I had been one who had majored in American Studies in college, and was always grounded in my constitutional rights, and so attempted to raise a reflective question for him, that might give him the opportunity to

make a new decision. I said to him, "And what would the better business bureau have to say about this? sir?"

He turned and said to me, "Pull over there in the front of the station lady. You're blocking traffic. Hey, Mike

call the garage now!! And I looked across the street to where the car was parked and saw that the other

You just drive out of the Exxon station and into the state police station, with squad cars all around.

I experienced a deep resentment at my total impotence to do anything to transform that situation. Or

I guess, my profound consciousness, at that moment, had to do with the social imbalance, the fact of the tyranny of the economic, And the ~~impotence~~ impotence of the political and the collapse of any final meaning.

The second event had to do with something ordinary like a phone call, which is what, in our house anyway that we get lots of. And it was a colleague, which ~~is~~ ^{are} also usually the ~~people~~ people who call us. And

she'd call to tell me that she had a new phone number and a new address. And I said to her in surprise,

"I didn't realize that you and Jack were moving." And she said to me, "Oh, it's not Jack and the kids,

it's just me." And then she went on to say, "I've never felt better/^{before}in my life. I love my job, I love

my apartment. and What's more I love my freedom. You know," she went on, "our marriage was never

really meant to be anyway. As a matter of fact, we've never been a family." Again I experienced a deep

resentment and anger at the deficient ring I heard in her voice, at my inability to formulate any words

reels of film. And I began to wonder - what's the difference - what's so different about my marriage? And then the third event was another ordinary, everyday ~~xxxxxx~~ occurrence. And that was the death of the father of a close colleague of mine. The colleague is someone who's just exactly my own age. And

I mean

it was a sudden death due to cancer, ~~xxxxxxx~~ that happens all the time these days. Her father had been fine, robust, seemingly healthy on Easter Sunday morning, and two weeks later he was gone. I couldn't for days understand why that rattled me. Because I knew that people die everyday and that's one the the realities that we all can anticipate. And yet I experienced myself consumed with a profoundly empty suffering. About the creatureliness of it all, about the weakness of human existence that could be reduced to nothing in a flicker of an eyelash. A suffering over my own resentment at my humiliation and my weakness that because I had experienced it, I knew all men had experienced it. A suffering over the imbalance of society, the collapsed supports, the structural disrelationships, the emptiness of life, even life filled with long and numerous successes that ended up being splintered as if against a cement wall & that blocked the future. Well I realized then that the collapse

end, as an answer to the world, that the end of production as a means to achieve man's vision was

dramatically clear, and that the political and the cultural had no way to respond. I discovered that

success had a great ~~big~~ big hole like a donut in the middle of it. And that the bourgeois values that ^{which} had become the world's values, and the myth by which those values were popularized, the myth of the good life

was no longer adequate. And that could be seen even on the streets of Harlem. That both the myth,

and the ~~ax~~ values that had supported it, and even the rebellion against those values were all gone.

really

I guess it was then that I/began to see what people had been telling me that the renewal movement had died.

And I looked around me and I saw that that was true. I looked around and saw that the deepening and the

wall between

growing thicker of the/haves and the have-nots. In India, Africa, and Latin America certainly there were

marginal cases of shifts, yet that wall seem to be growing wider, that rift, that abyss. That at a time in

a collapse in my own nation, or continent even, but it was a collapse that the ^{entire} whole globe was undergoing.

And that my mundane existence ran into ~~ka~~ that fact everyday. And every day the profound query was raised,

all
for me -What am I going to do in the face of/^{all}this? Now that I know that there is no more hiding in the

dreams that I once felt so secure in the midst of. And yet at the same time that that collapse became

evident, the New Social Vehicle was already appearing before my eyes. I saw things like the multi-national

corporations deciding to play the key role in determining the future of the world, or standing up and

indicating ^{that} if no one else would, they would. Or I read in the editorial section of the newspaper, that

someone else ^{felt} thought that the time for national government was over, that ^{felt} now was the time for world

government to set global priorities. I also began to recognize the fact that we had great possibilities

and those who decided to belong to the secular camp were out doing the business of the world, and the

I guess

religious were those set aside to refláct upon the world. And somehow as that chasm grew wider both

became disrelated to history. And the vocational collapse in that sense has been a real gift, I guess,

because it's brought about a new possibility and a new understanding for vocating one's life. And that new

I guess

understanding/has something to do with being the secular that the new vocation is to be the secular, to care

only
always

for life in the deeps, in a deeply reflective way, which is only, and has/ever been only possible when

life has been grounded in action, actional care for the world. And I guess our job is to radicalize

that nascent becoming or that in order to love, we would radicalize the fact that that new vocation is

just as possible for the pious as it is for the big business brass. Or somehow to demonstrate that to

to reveal transparently the deeps of life, to show forth ^{forth} through its mundanity the mystery, the power, and

the glory. Then is revealed the fact that every man, every man is vocated to the global-local. You

can't do anything on the local level we know without it having global ramifications. Nor can anything happen

globally without local man experiencing those effects. Or then it seems the fact is revealed that all men

are waiting to be beckoned, to be invited to be called forth. to participate, in what for me, has become

of humanity

a foundational or an ontological brotherhood/that goes way beyond the kind of petty dichotomies that we've

allowed to become established - male, female - black, white - caste or class - and one nation against another,

or a state against a nation, that brotherhood that goes beyond those ~~kind~~ dichotomies, and functions

as the vanguard or the front ranks of a new humanness. And then too, is revealed the fact that my life

Well, what practically is involved in all that, in all that that has to do with the love that is justice ^{which} relative to secularizing vocation. I guess, the first thing I would point to would be radical social engagement. And that has to do with a new covenant with God to love the world. To see to it that

the New Social Vehicle completes being birthed and is grown up. And that that is our social engagement.

It's like being the Ronstrum, those of you who have read Ancient of Days, the builder of the brand new.

The builders of the new earth and to discover in that the only possibility for authentic integrity. I guess

radical social engagement also has to do with acting out this new covenant in the particularities of the

mundane, and that's always where it becomes most difficult. Whenever we begin to practicalize all that

we know is the way it is in our own lives. One example, I guess, would be the mundanity of ~~may~~ my

late
big bottle fo champagne quite by surprise/one Saturday night. And our anniversary really wasn't until
two days later, but they were eager and we were interested, an so anyway the happening occurred. And the
bottles was opened and the glasses were filled. And before anyone took a sip one of them said, "Now
wait a minute. Before we have a toast, I've one question for both of you to answer. Was it worth it?"

So we answered the question, both of us, in the affirmative, and she being a great pedagog and guru, prior,
at the age of twenty said, "Why?" I guess it was that kind of accountability that allowed me to reflect

1 year later
and to realize that all marriages begin as some kind of a dream. When I got married I thought that I

had dealt with all my illusions. I'd been to the individual and family course, and Summer Program, and

RS-I, and I worked on my constitution and all my family models and I really thought that it was illusion-

twenty years. But one day a flaw appears. Now sometimes that flaw shows up very quietly, like the beginning of a run in a nylon stocking, you know that just moves down the side of a leg and then all of a sudden one day you see it. Now some times it doesn't occur that way, ^{sometimes} it moves in or it becomes

present ~~like~~ like a thunderbolt with brutal histrionics. But nevertheless, in what ever fashion that flaw occurs, it reveals the tragedy that's in every marriage. And the first interpretation of that

situation that you find yourself having before you is, is to say taht my problem is my marriage - that's my problem. My goal is my ideal marriage, you know the one that we all entered into marriage having in

some way. And then we ~~just set~~ ^{decide} our response, and more frequently than not my soltution is to break my

thought it , it doesn't really taste like ^{W/DI} you thought it was going to taste like, and you decide to

swap it for pistachio. I guess for me that has become more and more the profaning of God's creation

itself. To say as so many people have said to me recently that my marriage should never have happened. ^{is today}

My life with my husband should never have been. My life should never have been. That's profanity to

me. I guess, to be socially engaged to day, is to act out the new covenant with God to care for the

world, by passionately embracing the chance to have a missional marriage. To me recently it's become

s

clear that God has sent me the gift of the tragedy in my marriage. It's not that he's sent me the problem

of my husband, but he's sent me the gift of the tragedy in my marriage. And why I say that's a gift is,

it's that flaw ~~that~~ which becomes manifest and understood as the tragedy in the midst of marriage that is the

the resentment are no more. Radical social engagement has to do with articulating the new ethics

for
or providing methods of delivering a new practical vision. We've called this recently indicative

battleplanning. to me it's no wonder that marriage has been seen as a problem because we have been

taught all of our lives to operate out of what I call old moralistic ethics. And when you operate out

of old moralistic ethics you begin by creating an ideal vision, and then from that you set goals, and

you discover that problems arise and you deal with the problems in order to get to the goal which will

allow you to realize your ideal vision. In the process, what happens is that you become deluged with

more problems. You find yourself getting bogged down, you judge your projects a failure. You then

turn to something else. You try a new spouse or you bring in a new curriculum. I mean, it's the same

Planning

note, and you give up finally, in one way or another. Now the new ethics or the new indicative ethics

begin with what is, rather with the idealized vision. You begin with what is, you discern the contra-

dictions in the midst of the given, what-is-ness. You articulate the strategies and the tactics in order to

deal with the primary contradiction. And on the other side of your engagement in the implementaries you

arrive once again with what is. And you begin the ~~same~~ process all over again. Your vision is not

done away with, but your vision comes out of what is, not what ought ~~to~~ be. Or/something that's
not

a super-imposed ideal. And consequently there's ~~an~~ a high degree of motivity, or the consequence

of that is that human freedom is released. When you ~~find~~ yourself creating the new future rather
discover

kind
than being trapped in some ~~sort~~ of a frozen mindset. Finally I guess, radical social engagement is

go in on
around the globe. We had 51 dynamical manifestations of one experiment the global local. Rooted in
the globe, manifest in the local. I'd point I guess to the motivity that we have seen in the people
of fifth city and of Uptown as that which was only possible out of their understanding themselves as
participating in something which was.....(END OF SIDE 1)

ed
....The practicalization of Christian love in secularizing vocation, has also to do with decisional
expenditure. But it has to do with choosing your battleground. You find yourself always being called

upon to make up your mind, in the midst of a warfare of demands. And to answer the question, where am I
going to invest my life? That particularity is the form that your answer will take, will ever come as

an offense. And your engagement in that offensive particularity will always demand a perpetual re-

just

deep hearts of what's going on in our own times, the battleground too will shift. That

decisional expenditure has also to do with living in the dark night. When we began to talk about

the Dark Night of the Soul, someone introduced the image of the dead pigeon experience, and

used that image as one which was designed to universalize the fragility and creatureliness of life

that occasioned that profound kind of interior silence that pointed to one's understanding of the

agony of caring for all. I mean something very ordinary, life running across a dead pigeon

on the beach and somehow the bottom was blown out of that ordinary experience. And that became

a key kind of image for us. I remember when that image was first introduced, turning to my husband

after the session, and saying, "Joe, you know, I don't think that I've really/had a dead pigeon
ever

which is the dawning will never go away. It's interesting, the prayer in Daily Office, this morning, referred to that. That day after day, neverx will go away the humiliation, and the resentment, and the weakness, and the suffering. And never will I get out from under it. I mean

it's not as if I'll come to the other side of the Dark Night. The other side of the Dark Night is

the Dark Night. That Dark Night, which is nevertheless, or for that very reason, the unbelievable

strength, the unanticipated glory, the universal care, and the endless joy. And/my life will never be

lived in the midst of the silence of the Dark Night, which is that interior quiet in the midst/you of which

can hear the wailing cry of brothers doomed to die. And they always have particular faces. And

you also hear in the midst of that silence, a word that comes ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ in a number of

different ways , but for me I point to the one that maybe we all share in common, and that's

brothers doomed to die, you remember that song or that hymn "The King's Business", is the cause of

my return. To love the world anew, to engage in the long march is the only possibility. That

long march of the People of God in history, which is finally deciding to ever be in the Dark Night.

The long march is my only option. And with that Long March comes the knowledge of the stillness.

never being
of the the Stillness which is that deep sense of ambiguity and uncertainty,

clear. Experiencing yourself as a ping-pong ball flipped back and forth. Or that still-

ness has to do with ~~my~~ your awareness of your ineffectiveness. I was teaching school in Newark

and ~~times I found myself with a classrom~~ of thirteen and fourteen year olds who could

only read at ~~6th~~ on a second grade level. And after many months I realized that

even if I could stop the attrition, ^{rate} even if I could revolutionize the curriculum,

and get the kind of teaching materials that were necessary, that just as much human need

unfulfilled. I found myself this year showing up at airports two hours ahead of ^{flight} time.

Now taht doesn't have anything to do with what the little lady tells me to do when I ever

call to make my reservations, because she only/says to be there thirty minutes ahead of

THAT

time. But it's ~~you~~ got something to do with ~~the~~ fear lest I miss that plane and therfor miss something. Or I found myself setting as many as three alarm clocks at night.

One of them is a plug-in that has a long alarm you know, that will go on as long as the one

electricity is on. The oterh/is a louder old-fashioned wind-up, you know, that just

blares. And then the third is just in case something ~~x~~ happens to the other two - thats my travel alarm. And it has something to do, I guess, with my fear of missing something.

The fact is that I already ~~and~~ have and always will miss something, that that unfulfillment will never go away. Or that deep immobilization. ~~Or~~ like the image that

T.S. Elliot uses in "the Lovesong of J. Arthur Prufrock" - the butterfly pinned, and wriggling on the wall, only for me it's the butterfly of paralyzed suspension. And

just awaked from a dream. You find yourself asking a question as you face the unmoved mountain before you in your own life, Was i really working at it yesterday, or was I just dreaming? - That immobilization. And we say to that ping-pong that that Dark Night of the Soul and the Long March/^{of the People of God} is the ~~happiness~~ Happy Chance, that's ^{of} the Happy Chance to be the one beloved by God. Or beloved ~~by~~ the Lord. In whose life is found the Lord's pleasure. My life is pleasing to the Lord. And therefore in which ^{God's} ~~enriched~~ life is now the kingdom and the reward of ~~that~~ love. And that's always in the painful joy of passionately creating primal community across the New Earth.

That's the Happy Chance, that's what it means to go to heaven. Finally that means shouldering the world. Remember a few years ago/^{there was} that ad on TV - a man in shock and utter disbelief, I can't remember what kind of food it was maybe it was, let's say it was a pie, but in shock and utter disbelief, he said, "I can't believe I ate the whole thing." It's like we've ~~gone~~ ^{moved} far beyond that, we know that the 'whole

great decision makers. That possibility of using the Local Community Convocation

construct at the '76 Bi-centennial celebration excites me, because that's a

practicalization of love. Secondly shouldering the whole world I guess has to do

with recreating local community. Or raising up concrete symbols of new ethical

action in caring for the world. Wherever you see a human being standing in a

delineated piece of geography, x actualizing a practical vision by means of dealing

with primal contradictions that block the release of what life itself has indicated

is the possibility and the promise of every human being. There you see the

practicalization of Christian love. There you see the secularized vocation.

It shows up in the network of fifth cities across the globe. It shows in the form

of 51 simultaneous Local Community Convocations across the North American continent.

And it shows up, and sometimes it's not noticed, in the nitty-gritty implementaries

that enable the last fat lady and her five children who live in those three rooms

in the middle of the sitting room, that allows her to understand that she can decide about her own future. It shows up in the guild structure which is a means by which care for the whole life of a community - economic, political, educational, symbolic stylistic, care for the whole community is provided. The guild structure that provides the means by which every human being can be vocationed. I guess, that's, for me, one of the reasons why the guild is so important. It allows every human being the possibility of engagement in the practical care for all of creation. Rather than the stark other option that has been for so long the only option - collapsing before the faceless scythe of the future that drives man to drop out, because you're so afraid of what tomorrow's going to bring. Shouldering the world in finally, the vocation of the religious. Or the vocation of the religious is the Long March of the People of God, which is a decision to be in the Dark Night forever. And to know that it will

And the religious are those that ~~remind~~ remind the world that God has not deserted us.

I guess that's symbolized with the sign of the blue. That somehow points to that care

that radical f love for the world. That sign, which as any symbol, always points to

something far beyond itself. It points to the possibility of constant re-decision of

the part of every man. To engulf the one life that any one of us is ever given, in

creating the justice that every life across the whole planet might ^{one day} be so beloved

and be so engaged.