

I want to talk about profound humanness as it is demonstrated through the exemplar of the Saint. In relationship to the other roles, the poet discovers that life is an adventure. And this is a beginning point in understanding the dynamics of the Saint. A second dynamic in the midst of the adventure is to discover or get faced with the decision to fight the right enemy. In the midst of fighting the right enemy something happens. All the excess baggage that you and I have been born with, all the subjectivity that is part of our being is pared away. When that happens, the external situation becomes clearer than it ever was before. You find yourself freed up to be exactly what the situation requires. The world of the Saint exists within that happening.

Three things struck me while watching the Xerox TV special on November 27. One was the face of Willie B. Towers in the commercial from Delta Pace. The second was the end of the commercial with Pace citizens and Xerox employees standing on a mound with their hoes and shovels raised. The third impact of the evening was Bilbo Baggins. I read Tolkien when I was in college but I'd forgotten The Hobbit and put it aside as a good children's book. Bilbo Baggins has been with me since that evening along with those folks from Pace. Bilbo Baggins understood that life is adventure. He ended, co-incidentally, fighting the right enemy, the dragon. In the process, something happened to him. He shed his excess baggage in the same kind of journey we're on these days.

It seems to me that the Saint is involved in at least four things. Under the rubric of the Saints as they've showed up in Texas doing Town Meeting these days, this is very much an existential reflection. I don't know how to go back and ground it in what the historical Saints have been except to say that I did once see a movie about St. Francis, "Brother Sun, Sister Moon." The scene which I recall was Francis as a young man standing nude in the town square. He was the son of a very wealthy family. Since his father sold clothes and made fabric, Francis was always dressed well. To strip himself nude was a fine symbol of deciding to get rid of that.

It seems to me that the Saint affirms the real gift of the situation that he is in. The Saint is able to see the gift of the situation and affirm that gift to the hilt. He loves the gift in the situation in order that the situation come anew or come alive. Two weeks ago I went to a Town Meeting in Eagle Pass which is a border town in Texas. It was a strange experience for me. I had not been told this would be a Spanish-speaking Town Meeting. I had not been told that the girl I was working with had had very little training. Half-way through that Town Meeting, the gift of the situation finally dawned on me. The girl with whom I was working spoke Spanish and did not know the method. Therefore the opportunity I had was to allow that whole Town Meeting to be a learning experience for her. I became a tutor. Since I was the only one who didn't speak Spanish, everyone in that Town Meeting began to relate to it as a strange pedagogy session. The gift of that situation suddenly exploded and she came alive and the Town Meeting came alive and I learned that there is another side to Texas.

Secondly, the Saint lives vulnerable to ^{wound} the pain of life. The Saint lives open, almost as if he has been opened by a ~~wound~~ to the pain that is there. Driving through some of these poor towns day after day I have noticed a callousing effect on myself. But I believe that has been cut apart. There was a time when

we did Town Meetings as though they were a program. Now Town Meetings seem more like the fifteenth round of that fight that Rocky had. You are in there passionately. It is a struggle to keep the method before people. It is a struggle to allow the pain that is their lives to be objectified. Every Town Meeting is more painful than the last. I dread Town Meetings, not because I'm not sure of how to do them, but because every one is more painful. The Saint is in that world somewhere, angry over stupidity and blindness, angry over the power of those enemies, angry over anything that blocks creativity. The Saint walks with bold, unflinching confidence. The Saint takes the shaking heap of palsy which is himself and decides to place it on something that is so firm that even if he shakes it looks like bold, unflinching confidence.

I experience that with development these days. Don and I have done quite a bit of development in Dallas. I used to be terrified of certain people, especially powerful people. I always felt like we had to do a job to put a credible story together even though in my bones I've known that wasn't true. A week ago we were visiting a man for whom a freeway is named, a rich man. During this very matter-of-fact call, as we were laying out the Town Meeting: Texas story, he turned to us and said, "Well, I suppose you have a funding problem." I looked at Don, and I was ready at that point to just lay it all out. "We have an incredible funding problem. We are so far in debt." I had images such as this man is going to give us \$100,000. Well, let's go into how bad off we really are. But Don looked at him and said, "No, sir, we don't have a funding problem." I was lost at that point. I faced out the window. Then he came back and laid we were there for. I don't know where that kind of confidence comes from except to decide to stand on a foundation that doesn't shake even though you do.

Another element is that the Saint changes the situation with a nod of his head. I have always been struck by that. It is being able to spot the one person in a Town Meeting workshop who is not going to say anything until his life is changed. It may happen that night or it may never happen. It is also clear that the whole town is aware that if that person out there says something creative, lives are changed. So you wait and do nothing except all you can do to get that person to speak. In a recent Town Meeting a participant stood up to make a declaration about what the Town Meeting did. All the workshop leader did was nod her head to honor that response and move on. That is sheer presence of the method of Town Meeting; it's not personality at all.

It is the foundation on which you stand that is the key. It has nothing to do with the tactics or programs which you do. It is not Town Meeting or Social Demonstration on which you stand. You stand on life itself. That is the foundation which is always firm. You get yourself comfortable standing on that, although it is pure pain.

I think we are at a point where we can raise the image of the Saint because we have been fighting the right enemy. We have been pared away of our baggage. It is the foundation on which we stand that becomes the visible, active force in all that we touch.

The saint is both

an action in this world,

and a withdrawal to the Other World.

In the saint's withdrawal to the Other World,

he draws with him a congregation.

In the saint's action in this world,

he gathers about him a guild.

The congregation comprise those who are drawn, for whatever reason, by the authentic humanness discovered in the life of the saint. The congregation is the place where this world's sick of soul gather for healing. There they find clear articulation of the Word of God and Sacramental Substance for the interior journey. There also they find training and equipment for the return to this world. The focus of the congregation is the healing ministry of witnessing love; justice is but a theme for training. Humanness in its essential timelessness and in its contemporary bubbling forth is the fascination that sustains its functions. Congregational life is consummated with the sending from the Living God to responsibility for this world.

The guild comprises those who are concerned, for whatever reason, to join the action of the saint to bring humanness to other men. The guild is the locus of concrete achievement in the mobilization of the dynamics of social change. Here passionate men gravitate because they see the deeds of passion for the general course of history and for the actual masses of mankind in their total destinal struggle. The guild has need of this world's wisdom and talents. It treats its members as

healthy men who need nothing but the pouring out of their entire lives in the most effective way. The deeds of justing love consume the focus of attention; the word of healing rides incognito in the carriage of action. Not humanness, but mankind in its particular flight from and intrigue with humanness, is the fascination of the guild. Guild life is consummated with the historical achievement of its chosen tasks.

The corporate manifestation of the saint is the cadre. More accurately, the saint is the solitary figure of authentic man appearing in the midst of the cadre---at one moment in this person and then in that person---enabling the entire cadre to put on the functions of sainthood---even when this person or that one has not the power of sainthood. The cadre bears within itself the reality of both congregation and guild---congregation being drawn into humanness by the sainthood within its midst, and carefully being led out into the world by that same sainthood.

The cadre moves entirely away from the world through death itself into the endless life with the Eternal God. The cadre moves entirely into the world, further than the guild is inclined to go, further into the world than the majority of the world will go. The cadre is a catalyzing agent for extreme worldliness and extreme other-worldliness at one and the same time. The cadre is the living embodiment of the relationship between worldliness and other-worldliness. Cadre life is consummated in being the presence of the Other World in the midst of this world, occasioning the emergence of both congregation and guild.