

There is a line of the Prayer of Confession that goes like this: And we have left undone those things which we ought to have done and we have done those things that we ought not to have done and there is no health in us, but Thou Oh Lord. Never before have these words so marked by day. Never before has the unfinishedness turned accomplishment to ashes. Before dawn of the next day, the immensity of vocation has so relativized yesterday's small victories that they seem as naught and a vast new yearning marks each successive day.

It strikes me that for the man of faith or perhaps the sanctified man in resurgent -dark-night times there is a second vocational crisis. We know a great deal about the first vocational crisis, when all my deeds were finally only for one thing--becoming somebody in the eyes of the world, or self-justifying confirmation of the validity of our existence. We are experts in seeing this in our neighbor and by the grace of God in seeing it in ourselves. Perhaps this vocational crisis never goes away, but this is not the one that we are talking about now.

The second vocational crisis of our time and of our Order is more profound, more consuming and more agonizing to the soul. Where the first one was marked by desire for self-sustifying confirmation of the validity of my existence, the second can be described as self-sustifying confirmation of the validity of my love.

There are a number of people, mainly males, struggling with their decision to be the order right now who are in this second crisis, now. They are consumed with the inadequacy of their love and wondering where else they might serve out their care for the world and their love of God. A place where absolute accomplishment would be the hallmark of their daily expenditure; where Fulfillment and a 'job well done' will mean the same thing--where significant engagement and a completed task will share the same sentence and Integrity can mean human peace.

It is marked by resentment of all who seem to be in a position where accomplishment is clear--who seem to be assigned where love will bear fruit and quickly.

It is marked by anger at systems and structures and colleagues who appear to be the barriers and the cause of this crisis.

This question of whether to be in the Order is also marked by a resigned retreat, to a reduced endeavor, or to expenditure in an occupation, one that society has marked as a caring occupation.

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This is the kind of painful situation that marks the second vocational crisis. I want to suggest that this is the Grace of God in our lives, it is the sign of Holy Election--the election of those who have been allowed to sniff the scope of human suffering, the breadth of Global Care.

It is the election of those who know the depth of self-consciousness, humanness which humanly speaking is doomed to incompleteness and all its accompanying pain. It is the election of those who are called to have the courage to live in that humanly impossible situation, to live before the Divine.

I would announce that we have been wounded for life and it will never go away. That is our glory and our calling. In the name of the Christ. Amen