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WHAT I LEARNED AT THE FOLK FESTIVAL

“For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for a city that is to come.” Heb. 13:14

Same-sex “marriage” is now legal in Canada. People who hold to conservative values just lost another major battle after a two-year struggle. Moreover, it was only two years ago, as well, that the government passed legislation giving permission to experiment on the tiniest of humans in the embryonic stem cell law. And, almost at the same time the homosexual lobby and their media allies pushed through Bill C-250, a bill that makes it dangerous to publicly criticize homosexual practice.

With one hammer blow after another traditional values have been badly bludgeoned. Shell shocked, disbelieving and grieving, many Canadians cannot understand how our society can be so profoundly morally adrift. Some are so disheartened that they are in danger of saying, “It’s no use, nothing we say or do makes any difference, and there’s no point in fighting any longer.”

Augustine was one of the early heroes in the Church who would have understood this despair. In his time the magnificent city of Rome was attacked, looted and largely destroyed by the Visigoths in 410 A.D. Bereaved, despairing and confused many appealed to Augustine asking him how such a tragedy could have happened. As part of his response he wrote his classic tome, The City of God. He put steel in the hearts of his readers by reminding them that there is a “city of man” and a “city of God.” The city of God was a metaphor for eternal values and truth that can never be shaken because its foundations are laid on God. Augustine told his readers that they should focus on this city.

How does one keep on “keeping on”? In the face of the Canadian slide into barbarism, how does one keep despair at bay? Regardless of what might happen, regardless of apparent defeats and losses, believers will renew their hope, finding encouragement in the fact that we wait in expectant hope for a city whose maker and builder is God. And regardless of temporary defeats that city shall never, no never, be shaken.

It’s become a tradition in our family to visit the annual Millrace Folk Festival, held in Cambridge, Ontario over the last weekend in July. This year the weather was perfect. The setting, an amphitheatre on the riverbank, felt magical. The crowd was enthusiastic, and the program of Flamenco guitar with dancing could not have been more dramatic. But, as the late afternoon sun was sinking beyond the river it claimed a target. Then the target claimed me.

For from above the stage, and far off in the distance a glint of light caught my eye. Following it to the source I saw that it came from a metal cross atop a church steeple on the other side of the city. Over the next ten minutes the glint grew to a steady light and

then a white-hot glow that captivated my eyes. And in that hallowed moment I quite forgot the music, the ambiance and the scarlet clad dancers. For God held my gaze with the fiery cross. With silent, burning image he reminded me that the Church is the light of the world. The message was not that the Church is supposed to be the light of the world, but, rather that the Church is the light of the world. The message was without, “ifs”, “ands”, or “buts”. Oh to be sure, I knew that already. But I obviously needed reminding. And, what a deal of good it did my soul. For the message was a renewal of my calling.

Fact is the Church has received everything it needs to light the world. Pastors, Bishops, Elders, Deacons, and lay people, alike lack nothing to bring light to the darkness. We have truth and knowledge to speak to those who would trash marriage, to those who kill and call it choice, to those who would make prostitution legitimate employment, to those who call for mercy-killing, and assisted suicide.

We must never forget that we don't walk away from a calling. For, yes, discouragement, despair, losses and crosses may tempt us to become AWOL light bearers.

So I invite you to keep holding up your light with me. And, all the more as darkness deepens. Let us never be ashamed of the light given to us. let us never let politically correct people put a basket over it. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine...till Jesus comes.

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