

**The Question of the Week**

“We know that all creation is groaning and in labor pains even until now...  
and we groan ourselves as we await our redemption.”

Romans 8: 22

Is that what is going on in the world today? Labor pains. There is such travail, such upsetment, such exposure to the ravages of the coronavirus, such exposure to the failures and flaws of society and culture. There is upheaval everywhere. Or so it sometimes seems. We yearn for normalcy and ordinariness. But when we study history and the dynamics that are made visible and unfolded in the events of history, we can sometimes spot trends and cycles. Fifty years ago, there was a time of very similar upheaval in our own society. Many of those in positions of power and authority right now were young people in their twenties back then.

In addition, about every five hundred years, give or take a generation, there are similar worldwide, earth-shaking events that change the world and history itself. From the birth of Jesus until the fall of the Roman Empire at the end of the fifth century to the great schism of division of the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches in the mid eleventh century to the Protestant Revolt in the early to mid-sixteenth century to the present time of worldwide upheaval at the beginning of the twenty-first century there have been great unfoldings and societal and cultural transitions. Things boil up in a critical mass and then explode into a new reality with some of the former reality included and some of the former reality jettisoned.

My sense is that we are right, smack-dab in the midst of one of these epochs at the present moment. What will emerge is uncertain and there are powerful forces at work to strive to determine what this new world will look like. Saint Paul, in his letter to the Romans two thousand years ago used the imagery of the body politic being in labor. He spoke of how all creation groans and is in agony. I know that human beings groan and are in agony at times. But Paul speaks of creation itself. Paul realizes that creation itself has been negatively impacted by the unleashing of sin. Our earth is surely aware of what selfishness does to the beauty of our planet. Pollution. Mindless squandering of earth's bounty and resources. But there is a new Spirit unleashed in and through the person of Jesus of Nazareth. That Spirit will prevail because that Spirit has already raised Jesus beyond death. Death does not prevail. Life wins. Love is triumphant. Do you believe that despite what you are witnessing at the present moment? That is the question of the week.