

**Companions on the Journey**

**October 17, 2021**

Dear Friends in Christ,

Being pastor is a great blessing for me even with its myriad challenges. Probably akin to what you parents experience with your children, both blessing and challenge. I try to do my share of reading and reflecting. I am very blessed to be a morning person and so the bulk of my praying time is early in the day. It provides me the opportunity to do my thinking and ask for things for you and your families as I become aware.

Sometimes the bigger picture grabs hold of my attention rather than the very specific claims on my time and attention that are more familiar and more persistent. Recently I came across this passage which made me sit up straight. Please read:

*"First we overlook evil. Then we permit evil. Then we legalize evil. Then we promote evil. Then we celebrate evil. Then we persecute those who still call it evil."*

I must say it kind of took my breath away. It has the feel of truth to it even though it could benefit from some nuancing. Ask yourself if you see any signs of this in where our culture in America is today, and where you can see it heading.

Are there things which were once clearly taught as evil, morally wrong and sinful that are now taught as virtues, as morally good and to be embraced? I certainly can, without even trying too hard. How can this be? Well, do you remember when I'm okay, you're okay." was in vogue. The late 1960's? Let's not be judging each other. Let's let each person do what they believe okay for them even if it may not be okay for everybody else. Who are you to tell me what is right and wrong. It was the decade when subjectivity emerged and the world of objective truth was viewed as intolerant and overbearing and not "open."

Fear of being labelled as intolerant and judgmental started to have an effect in people's lives. When I was growing up my mother could care less about what others were doing or what they thought was okay. She clearly knew what was the right thing to do and what was wrong. She taught us that. If someone wanted to label her intolerant, it had no effect on her. She was not answerable to them. She was one day to be answerable to the Lord.

We seem to have misplaced that kind of thinking in our present age. There was great clarity and delineated boundary lines, not only in relationships but in moral living. All of that has been clouded up. There is great confusion—everywhere. Especially true in what is proper in relationships, what is good and moral, let alone holy. Jesus has not changed his teaching. It is as it was when he gave it. Those who would make the claim that he would be much more amenable to today's culture than he was to the culture of his day are just plain wrong. He did not accept everything from his Jewish culture nor bow down to the cultural idols of the scribes and Pharisees, they were the elites of that time. He battled them and resisted them and challenged them. And they called him names. Yes. But he stood his ground. They cut him down of course. That is always the last resort. Disagree with what is being claimed? Eliminate the person. Problem solved. But not really. Truth is truth. Truth is one. Truth is God's understanding of what the meaning of life is. God is not yes one day and No the next. God reveals that which is true and for our benefit. God does not say that our misuse of the gift of freedom for our own enjoyment or personal benefit is a good thing. He names it sin. Yes, he came to bring forgiveness for sin. But that applies to those who recognize that they sin and ask to be forgiven—not to those who claim that whatever they do is fine and there is no sin in them. Jesus had a major problem with that mindset. It is evil. It is the way the enemy has always thought. Now, go back and reread that passage again. "First we overlook evil..."

In the peace of Christ,

Msgr. McHenry