

Lent Revisited?

Living liturgically, Pentecost this year has seemed more like Lent, with numerous prophetic calls to repentance, to reflection, to renewal (follow links below).

With Canada Day upon us, I'm hoping that 2015 will be the year that I can return to proudly displaying and wearing the maple leaf, rather than hiding it in shame and embarrassment. We're at the threshold of some tremendous challenges, if we want to rescue the Canada we thought we knew, as these publications reveal.

My adopted country is a mess, though not without signs of hope. In El Salvador, I place my hope in the spirit and vision of the small communities, mostly rural, but also including those I accompany regularly inside prison walls, behind prison bars. "IPAZ" (ecumenical pastoral initiative for life and peace) I would also include in this group of hope-livers, hope-givers.

We're realizing that my birth (home?) country is also a mess, also not without signs of hope. My hope remains with our First Nations sisters and brothers, survivors and thrivers, whose culture "my" people have tried to destroy with such determination over the past century and beyond. My political hope has shifted from Ottawa to Alberta (of all places!). My ecclesiological (ELCIC) hope has shifted from Winnipeg to Alberta (of all places!), but also includes many faithful communities across the country. My conviction continues, that we're all in this together, learning from each other, supporting each other in love, solidarity and faith.

The other, more patriotic and visionary Stephen (Lewis, diplomat) recently said: "Somewhere in my soul I cherish the possibility of a return to a vibrant democracy where equality is the watchword, where policy is debated rather than demeaned, where the great issues of the day are given thoughtful consideration, where Canada's place on the world stage is seen as principled and laudatory, where human rights for all is the emblem of a decent and civilized society."

For your July 1 "Lenten" meditation:

Truth and Reconciliation Commission summary:

<http://www.myrobust.com/websites/trcinstitution/File/Interim%20report%20English%20electronic.pdf>

"Dismantling Democracy, Stifling Debate and Dissent" (Canada):

<http://voices-voix.ca/en/document/dismantling-democracy-stifling-debate-and-dissent-canada>

And now, for all global citizens:

Though Pope Francis is not as strident, not as offensive as the Hebrew prophets, or as Martin Luther, but rather more diplomatic, his audience cannot help but get the message that we are, for the most part, off-

track. We have made a mess of God's good gift of creation, understanding "dominion" as control, domination and destruction, rather than love and care. And it's hard to imagine that "Canada" isn't in the back of the author's mind, alongside his woes and warnings.

I wish I had the faith to believe that the Pope's latest encyclical could convert a certain prime minister and country to be on the side of God's creation, both humanity, especially the excluded, and the environment, resilient but threatened, as the Pope advocates and encourages. However, I fear I'll need to rely on compatriot voters to salvage our nation and get it back on track to a more divine perspective on life.

Reading and reflecting on Pope Francis' encyclical, I was struck by what every commentator (except YSUCA--Salvadoran Jesuit radio) seems to have missed . . . that the encyclical is very balanced between environment and the excluded . . . in fact, these are not two separate issues. Pope Francis does an awesome job of interweaving the two threads, throughout, continuously. It is all about love, trinitarian love: God as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, but also the trinitarian relationship among God, humanity and all of God's creation, including especially the environment and the excluded.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

In spite of these prophetic prods, an excess of racism has been exposed in June.

On the other hand, an abundance of Gracism has been revealed in June, even in Charleston--especially in Charleston . . . and in Canada?

I pray that this Canada Day be a Lenten-style celebration for us all, a day of repenting, reflecting and renewing.

Pondering my global citizenship this Canada Day,

Brian

Rev. Brian Rude, DD, "In Mission with El Salvador / *En Misión con El Salvador*",
Synod of Alberta and the Territories, ELCIC