

I have often said that my children have been my greatest spiritual teachers.

As many of you know, Bill and I have four daughters....

All four girls were born within a five year time span

Life was full and we were busy!

Motherhood...parenting...offered me countless significant opportunities and challenges

One of the challenges I experienced when I became a mom was concerning my faith.

Not because of parenting's difficulties and uncertainties....

but because if I was to teach the girls about God, Jesus, the Church...

I could only teach them what I really believed...so of course, then the question arose...

what did I really believe

and what did I just accept because it was comfortable, easy and my habit?

Well...once we got the girls into school, I had a bit of breathing room

and I started meeting with a spiritual director as questions arose

in my mind and my heart about some teachings I had inherited

from my religious upbringing...

Harry suggested I read history of the Catholic church...

and gave me one of his books entitled: "A brief history of the Catholic Church"

Reading that book was troubling, liberating and exciting!

That was when I first learned that many foundational doctrines and dogmas

were formulated under pressure from the Roman Emperor.

I was shocked and dismayed, at first,

to learn how big a role politics played in the development of the Church....

**Years later, I was shocked and dismayed, at first,
to learn in seminary that the Bible has contradictions and its own prejudices....**

**As I continued my journey,
I was shocked and dismayed --at first,
when I realized that I would have to let go of my very small understanding of God...
so that my head and my heart could grow larger into the Holy Mystery
of the Abba God of Jesus...**

**As I learned these new things...
I had a choice...either I could attempt to forget about the new learnings,
go back to my old innocence...
or I could keep moving forward
and trust that I was being held in the presence of God...
which I have come to learn is the foundational meaning
of the word 'faith'.**

**Anytime we want to grow...
whether in our relationships with others
in our understanding of a situation
---in our knowledge of anything...
we must be willing to let old beliefs go
in order to let to new knowledge and insights in...**

**We do this all the time in our human affairs.
For instance: we all know that illness is caused by germs ...
but it wasn't until the late 1800's when Louis Pasteur put forward his
"Germ Theory of Disease" and developed vaccines for anthrax and rabies.
Up until Pasteur's hypothesis, people thought demons or the gods made people sick.
and at first Pasteur was scorned and ridiculed.**

His theory was called “ridiculous fiction” by Pier Pachet, then Professor of Physiology at Toulouse University in 1872...

but we all know who has one that debate....

Or sometimes we hold an opinion of someone that isn't true and it limits our ability to see their real gifts and talents...

For instance, if you have ever watched “The Voice”?

Jordan Smith won that talent contest this year,

but he doesn't look the part of pop singer extraordinaire!

Jordan is a large man and looks more like a librarian than a popular singer....

Human beings always have to let go previous held opinions and beliefs in order to grow in wisdom and knowledge.

This is true in our everyday lives and true in our spiritual journey as well...

In order to receive, we must let go.

If we are convinced that we already know the Truth, have the Truth...

be it about God, ourselves or others...

we are limiting our ability to experience the Truth.

How is God ever able to show us anything more –to teach us anything new— if and/or when we are already so full of what we already know....

just like that cup of tea

We must be willing to let go of some of our habitual patterns and ways of thinking about God

so that we might create room for the God to make God self known to us...

Way back in the 13th century one of the greatest of Christian theologians of all times, Thomas Aquinas once warned us,

all of our thinking and theologizing and writing about God is not God.
and he said: the minute we give God any name: we have just missed God.
No human name, Aquinas said, can hold the totality of the God...

When we hold firm to our thoughts about God,
“God is this, God is that, God is not this and not that...”
there is no room for the EXPERIENCE AND PRESENCE of God in our minds,
in our hearts or in our lives....

When we allow our hearts and minds to open and empty
so that we have space to receive the wisdom and Love of God.
When we say yes to letting go of our ideas about God so that
we could actually experience God....
oh boy...get ready! we will not be disappointed!

When we allow our hearts and minds to be filled with Love,
we absolutely, hands down,
grow closer to the one we call Holy and Divine..
the Lover of all that is,
the Abba God of Jesus of Nazareth,
the Creator of everything,
the Sustainer of all that we are ,
the Redeemer of our small mindedness and
the Liberator of our own God grounded Soul.

So...let us seriously consider letting go of
any opinion that keeps us small,
any belief that narrows our vision,
any thinking that constricts our hearts.

Let us seriously consider praying for the courage to be emptied of our certitudes so that we might be filled with the most Amazing, Mysterious, Glorious Love we have ever known...

And, of course: let us never forget to say, Thank you! Amen....