

The changing heartbeat life and grace: 5th Sunday of Easter

“One of the most dangerous fantasies of life is believing that the way things are now is the way things will always be. Letting go of that fantasy is the pulse of life.”

When I first heard those words spoken by Judith Viorst at a lecture in 1986, I didn't pay too much attention to them.

As the decades pass, I pay more attention. Perhaps, for having lived so many changes: family, friends and church. Or, perhaps for dread of falling into the melancholy of those who perpetually mourn a past that will never return. Whatever the case, Judith's words resonate in May of 2020 with an almost prophetic ring.

This Sunday's gospel is about a group of friends (disciples) struggling with a changing relationship with Jesus. (John 14:1-12). He is departing this world and it feels as if everything is ending.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Have faith in God; have faith also in me...I am the way, the truth and the life.”

Jesus is less afraid. Yes, the relationship will change, deeply, profoundly. But “change” does not equal death.

“Change” isn’t necessarily the unraveling of all that that we’ve been given.

By letting go of the physical limitations of Jesus’ body that walked the roads of Galilee and the narrow streets of Jerusalem, this circle of friends can now become the physical extension of Jesus through space and time.

And, as the circle is widened, they can allow themselves to be transformed by his words and Spirit, so as to become the eyes, arms, hands and heart of Christ in the world.

Yes, the relationship has changed. But it is not ended.

None of us know what “changes” the future will bring. But this much I know:

To live with a “troubled heart” each day, serves no good purpose. To perpetually mourn for what once was, is to live with a cruel thief that robs the house (and the heart) of life and joy.

Both before, during and after a pandemic, our world hungers for a kind of love, a “way” that helps people make sense of life...and death.

The work of Christ must go on.

His heart continues to “beat” through us when we live his word and extend his compassion.

When we do that, our corner of the world becomes a more sane, humane, even “holier” place. And, grace circulates more freely throughout the body of the human family.

So, amidst all the changes that life will bring you, may you find daily peace and a healthy dose of joy in having joined your heart to the heartbeat of such an awesome and amazing adventure. *Amen.*