



Thoughts on the Journey...

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One evening, when watching television, I remember flipping through the channels. I came across a show that people mentioned to me as a must-see-to-believe program. I was immediately intrigued and folks were right, I could hardly believe what I was seeing. It was like slowing down to look at a car wreck. I became transfixed on the show's content and wondered how people could live with that much disorder in their lives. The show was "Hoarders" which showcased the psychological disorder of compulsive hoarding. In this particular case, after the death of her mother, a woman in her mid-40's, began to collect and hoard everything she could get her hands on: magazines, newspapers, things bought from yard sales, you name it and it was somewhere in her house. There were towering piles of everything you can think of, so much so, that she had to create pathways to get from one room to the next. The conditions were so deplorable that the health and welfare authorities had to be called in because she had her child living in that squalor with her. Other family members had made attempts to help her clean up, but she refused to let go of anything; she held a death grip on all of her possessions. She could not see the disorder that everyone else could clearly see. This poor woman had imprisoned herself in this fortress of 'junk' to the point where she was alienating people she loved. She herself seemed to be miserable. It was as though she was collecting these things to fill the void that her mother's death had created; a misguided effort to surround herself with things that she thought could bring her security and contentment. The key to her freedom and happiness was in letting go of the mounds of junk she was collecting.

Most of us can look at this woman's situation and clearly see the dysfunction and disorder. Most of us would not allow our homes to be cluttered to the point where authorities had to be called. (although I have often hoped the Board of Health wouldn't pay me a visit on some days)

But, what about our inner - home - our spiritual

indwelling: What hurts, jealousies, angers, resentments, and the like, have we collected over the years and cling to like piles of ugly rubbish? These are the very things that can end up defining who we are and will be the very things that will make us spiritually immobile in deepening our relationship with God.

In the Gospel of John this week it is Jesus who says,

"I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you."

It is the Trinity that wants to be our guests and dwell within us. But how well do we prepare our inner homes for these divine in-dwellers? What is lining the walls of our souls? What are we willing to let go of in order to keep our spiritual dwelling worthy of our God?

Keeping God's word requires that we make a personal effort to rid ourselves of the things that are not of love. Granted, it's hard work to forgive, to make peace with people we have been at war with, to let go of our pride that keeps us from healing, to wipe the bitterness from our hearts, but the work of cleaning house is less demanding if we do it on a consistent basis. It is more manageable when we refuse to cling to things that will create decay in our souls. The more we let go of the things that are not of God, the more clearly we will see God.

Like the woman who was hoarding, the more we cling to useless clutter, the more we find ourselves deaf to what Christ wants us to hear and blind to what he wants us to see. Through the power of the Trinity we can do all things through God who strengthens us. Jesus promises us peace if we create an environment of love within: Love of God, Love of neighbor, Love of self. Perhaps our Spring cleaning can begin within!