

Dark Night

Good fortune smiled upon me recently. No, I did not win the lottery or get some other material windfall. I met a good man, in a special place. I'd spoken with this man before, though not in the context of which we talked this time. Our previous conversations were brief, albeit pleasant. This one was deeper.

Much deeper.

We don't often get the chance to discuss 'spiritual' matters with others. Or maybe, we don't take the chance, passing on the opportunity. I think many of us think we do not want to make the other person 'uncomfortable' by speaking of matters related to Him or how He wants us to be. I suspect this really has little to do with their discomfort and more our own.

This person was so dear with me. He gave me the chance to discuss what was happening in our life, my beloved's and mine and all those dear to us. I talked about things I wouldn't normally talk about with another, things I wasn't too happy with, about me. I spoke of an 'estrangement' from the dear good Lord, weighed down by the trials and tribulations of our times, weary I was. I told him I felt 'distant' from God, though I professed I never gave up on God, that my love for Him knew few bounds. I just felt battered. I felt as if I just couldn't hear God as far as what His will was for me.

He began by speaking about the 'dark night of the soul'. My first inclination or reaction was, "You don't need to tell me about the 'dark night of the soul', I've been there and done that for years uncounted".

But I stopped myself and that mind muscle reflex, and just listened to this gracious person. I took the 'me or I' out of it. He talked about a couple of other people. It just so happened to be two people I greatly admire, one I've come to know well through things she said and things written about her, the Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. The other was Saint John of the Cross, who may have first coined the term 'dark night of the soul'. Then he went on to talk about how to work through the 'battering', things to do like keep praying and stay current with what He has to say through things like Scripture and so many other places and people, others created in His Image and Likeness, just like me and just like you. He talked about things to avoid, that cause one to be drawn away from Him.

He said, "If you are not going towards Him, you are going away from Him."

He spoke of the journey to Jerusalem and though horrid and difficult, with a second to the last act that was awful, it was not the last act. The last act was resurrection, something to which all of us can look forward.

And it is the first act of eternity.

His main ending point was about persistence and perseverance.

When I was a sales and marketing exec I hung my hat on one trait or way of being far above and beyond all others. Regardless of the consequences, regardless of the amount of work, the time involved, the seemingly insurmountable challenges, I knew one thing was more important than anything else...

Persistence.

As we were parting this good man said something to the effect, "Stay the course. Keep up the prayer life. Read and learn and discern what He says to us in so many ways, Scriptures being most sacred. See Him in all the wonderful places and people He is, was, will be... know Him, be Him to others especially those most closest to you, and ask Him for what you need. Be specific, and articulate your needs."

And then he said, "And persevere and persist."

Just persist and good things will happen - even if they don't happen until the very end.