

On enjoying being a martyr

A few days ago, I became very stressed out about my unfinished house. I was sitting at my computer, at the time, and I noticed that a UK friend of mine was online, so I began to chat with her via *skype*. She asked me how I was and all my frustrations with the architect/contractor poured out. She began to counsel me in the same way that I have done with her and others in the past, but I was having none of it – for how, I thought, could anyone understand the stress of my situation? I was, I suppose, thoroughly enjoying being a martyr to the indignities heaped upon me! To me, of all people! However, one thing she said to me did inch its way past my defences. She said, “You have a brother coming to visit, but no house in which to entertain him; I, on the other hand, have a house, but no brother to visit me. Which of the two of us is the more fortunate?”

At first, I “poo-pooed” the remark, but Oh, how such words gently begin to work havoc on our perceived sense of injustice, once you let them past the gate of your mind! The thought began to open me up to the blessings that my particular situation has made possible. For instance, I am, at present, staying in the guest house of a delightful family from the Church and getting to know them far more closely than I would ever have done had I not been made homeless. Also, with a friend’s help, I have found a wonderful place for my family and myself to stay during their visit – and at a very good price – and I have to grudgingly admit that it is much more suitable than my house would have been, even if it had been ready for occupation. So, despite my enjoying being a martyr, this view of my plight, from 8,000 miles away in England, is helping me take a broader vision of things.

We often get so tunnel-visioned about our situations. When we have an issue about something, it can so easily become the only thing we see and so come to imagine that it alone is important. We peer at it so closely that we are blinded to the many other opportunities, which come into play precisely because that immediate concern has not been resolved. At such times, I have forgotten that I am not the only player in my life-game; I am not the only one, who determines what is of value in my life and in my world. There is another power at work, gently moving me towards the people, things and situations that I need at this time – even though I do not know I need them. I see my world from one angle, whereas my co-player sees it from all angles. So, maybe my not having a house to live in, is of greater benefit to me at this time and place, than having it completed, for it is giving rise to wonderful opportunities that I would otherwise not have. However, I think that maybe I am enjoying being a martyr to misfortune far too much, at present, to admit that as yet!

Diary

Getting back to my “martyrdom”, before I went to Malaysia I ordered quite a lot of things for my house – because I have to furnish it from scratch. At the time, as I was sure that the house would be ready, I gave them a delivery date. Some of the firms have obligingly held the things over until I am ready to take possession, but others are demanding that I collect them now. So, my friend, Rian, kindly offered to store them in his house for the time being. Poor guy! As time goes on, he is having to walk sideways through his house to get past all the things. But then – Ain’t friends great!

I was very disappointed to discover, when I returned to Bali that a moratorium on my prison visits. I am told that the evangelical Protestants, who visit the prison, have been baptising so many of the inmates that the Authorities have become worried and are working out a new policy about visits from clergy. The Parish Priest here thinks that our visits will be reduced from twice a week to once in six weeks. Please pray for all concerned.

This Thursday, 15th November, I will be celebrating Mass for my Dad, for it will be the centenary of his birth. This is one of the reasons that my brother is coming to visit. However, I am having a little trouble getting my head round the thought that my Dad is a hundred years old!

God bless,

Terry