

When Things Make No Sense, What Then?

Isaiah 9:1-4, Matthew 4:12-23

Far too many things that we experience in the world—come under the heading—“That makes no sense.”

At a celebration following the Chiefs victory over the Titans, people are murdered and badly wounded by gun violence.

“That makes no sense.”

A national leader in South America decides to cut down a significant amount of rain forest and when other countries protest, he replies, “Well, you did it too.”

“That makes no sense”.

A basketball team within seconds of a huge victory gets into a brawl with the losing team.

“That makes no sense.”

Our national leader physically imitates and mocks a person with disability, says he can kill someone in broad daylight and get away with it and calls soldiers’ traumatic brain injuries –“headaches”.

“That makes no sense.”

Cars speed along city streets, ignoring pedestrian crosswalks, and incoming bicyclists from side streets and kill a dozen people in less than a year.

“That makes no sense.”

City governments, national parks, major insurance companies, and military installations prepare for climate change while our national government takes away protections that slow or even reduce climate change.

“That makes no sense.”

Now , I understand that in the meantime, many people— some of us!— wake up, go to work, enjoy our families and friendships, have fun, perform great works in the community, enjoy athletics, art, music parties, good food, and loving relationships, advance in school and careers, help lots of people in hours and days that make a lot of sense.

But we know that the “Makes no sense” part lurks over and under all of it.

At least “absurd and incomprehensible” intervenes again and again, even if we try to forget it.

We were almost at war several weeks ago.

A lot of people, non combatants, did die.

Their families and friends are in constant grief now, in the private corners of life.

The world quickly turns the page. Which makes no sense!

We are rightly concerned about the fate of troops and veterans, and committed to their welfare—but in modern warfare, by far the largest number of casualties and often the actual targets, are non combatants.

Gun manufacturers and lobbyists and well armed citizens decry the slightest reform in gun laws, but the victims are almost all non-combatants. And the majority of them are self inflicted, by suicide.

Chaos! Confusion! Disorientation! Dread!

These are marked characteristics of modern life.

They were marked characteristics of the world Jesus lived in.

Jesus called people to walk out of that world and follow him.

Jesus called disciples to fight their way out of that experience and follow him.

We know now that the fishermen and their families, whom we read about in today's New Testament reading—and were among the first to follow Jesus—were experiencing disorientation and chaos in their own lives along the Sea of Galilee.

Their village life, their way of making a living, their culture and their spiritual lives were coming apart due to the invasion of Roman economic and military power.

To many of them, the world made no sense anymore.

Jesus said, “Instead, follow me. I will show you a way.”

Our situation is very similar. Massive billion and trillion dollar economic interests have shifted the world off whatever equilibrium we had. The unemployment rate may be down, the stock market up for 10 straight years, and construction going on everywhere....and lots of us are looking with hope toward a new year and a new decade.

Still, there is widespread unease and anxiety over deep, constantly repeating realities that “make no sense”.

Do you hear Jesus saying, “Follow me. I will show you a way that you can take?”

I know you do!!! I know you do!!!

But still, it is you who must decide to take the way?”

As the old hymn puts it, “Jesus is calls us o'er the tumult of life's wild and restless sea.”

Do you want to be Jesus' disciple?

It's a tall order!

A major commitment. Please do not take it lightly.

To become a disciple today means, for instance, that you start reading the Bible, not to find general truths about life and the world, but that you read it to understand truths about your life and your personal world.

For the Bible to have authority, it has to have authority for you.

You have to find Jesus and his ideas inside of your own life, your own mind and heart, there guiding you from deep within you.

Want to become a disciple?

Start finding your own ministry.

Many of you are doing that.

Do you want to follow Jesus?

Start finding your own great work—the action in your head! Your hands! And your feet that has value for you!

Join with some other people seeking the same way, truth and life.

You can't come to the Heavenly Father—or to the Mothering Spirit except by starting to walk the Jesus way **inside** yourself.

In the face of things that make no sense at all, spirituality refers to interior movement and interior action that gives your life meaning and value so that at the very least **you** make sense.

Your life makes sense.

From there, you begin try and find some other disciples who personally refuse to accept despair— “things that make no sense”!— AND commit to shared action— filled with fragile, yet enduring hope.

The story of Jesus beginning to find disciples is just this kind of event.

In his baptism, he has already had the interior experience of finding himself deeply connected to God. He awakens to who he is.

He makes the choice! He takes the leap into faith.

Now he is approaching others with the same possibility, the same choice:

First Peter and Andrew! Then James and John!

Then Mary Magdalene and Mary and Martha and all the others....and on and on, and now the choice, in our generation, comes to us.

You may not be able to change a world that makes no sense.

But you can resist a world that makes no sense—changing you.

Now you do not know if you will have any impact.

You don't even know what you are doing with yourself.

But what you are doing is the best thing!

Inspiration!

That leads to transformation!

Transcendence that creates incandescence.

Jesus did say, "I am the light of the world."

Yet he also said, "You are the light of the world."

Believe that the light in the world is growing inside you—

And things will start to make sense.

Amen.

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