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Let Easter release your inner immortal

Donna Schaper | Apr. 18, 2014 Eco Catholic

When we lose a sense of the immortal, we lose more than a dusty old idea. We lose a sense of storied time. We lose a sense of beginning and end, and we float in a world where the devils easily have their way with us.

One devil is capitalism. Not all capitalism is demonic but enough of it is to notice and name. Some of it is energetic, curious and interesting, urgent to find the optimum human potential. But much of its wine has become vinegar. It acts like a whip, beating its horse to go faster and faster, long after the horse has no idea where it is going with such speed.

Capitalism loves to assure you that the more you have in the totalitarian now, the better off you will be. Never mind that clutter and hoarding are major social problems for the elderly. Or that many parents don?t think they can find time to eat children with their dinner ? I hope you get my point.

Or that college students put up signs in bathrooms, ?If you are overwhelmed with work and how much you have to do, call this hotline. Open from 10 p.m. till 3 a.m.? This multi-generational anxiety is the result of capitalism?s whip.

Many of us think that we have to demonstrate ?against? capitalism. I am not so sure. We might do better to pray for an improved sense of immortality. We might challenge the whips by imagining long time, not short time. Eschatological time rather than discordant time. We might remember our great beginnings and our great ending.

I have spoken about the time famine [1] before, that pervasive sense that we don?t have enough time. Without a sense of immortality, indeed we don?t have enough time.

I have also spoken about the great release in ?ashes to ashes, stardust to stardust [2]? before. Not dust but stardust. If we regain even a little twinkle of a sense of immortality, we won?t be as available to the whips of capitalism.

Once we have flattened life to our 83.2-allotted years, there is no reason not to have everything, do everything and be everything. There is also no dimension, no before, no now, no after. There is just the horse galloping and gobbling.

Two experiences of late assure me that the broken time narrative is starting to really hurt us. It joins our fear that climate change will make an abrupt ending, to everything but the stardust. One is the joy our parishioners experience when we open the service remembering the first peoples on our land. Another was that subconscious slip that happened on Ash Wednesday. Instead of dusting each other with ashes and using the words, ?ashes to ashes, dust to dust,? we offered stardust as our destination and our version of immortality.

We need a credible sense of immortality in order to manage the time famine. Stardust is different than heaven or hell. It is something you can see because scientists have found the machinery to see it.

When we have a sense of long time and unending time, we are less likely to scrunch everything into today. Instead, we can deepen the always and the everyday, like washing dishes or flossing teeth, or any joining of spirit to flesh. We can infuse trust into managing and administering. We can be less rushed in our 83.2 years.

When we sense the sacred in our ashes and our stardust, consumerism is less the default position for spending our time. The time famine is an active degradation of everyday life. A sense of stardust can reverse the degradation and begin the resurrection among us.

We will find the energy to turn the vinegar back to wine when we accept the Easter gift to imagine long time -- resurrected time -- stardust all around us.

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