

Divine Mystery... The Freedom to Say "I Don't Know"

January 2015

The older I get, the more comfortable I get with not knowing, which is interesting because I probably know a lot more at this point in my life than in those early years, when I thought that admitting I didn't know was something to be avoided.

When I was younger, I thought my job was to master information. I liked hard and fast answers, and the power that came from knowing them. I seldom said, "I don't know."

Now, I know that there is much I will never know. And don't need to know. Now, I am much more at ease with ambiguity and with mystery. Especially when it comes to faith.

Certainly, our faith has content. There are things that we espouse to be true: God created all things, called a people to be his own, gave laws to direct the community, desires to bless the whole world through us. Jesus is the Incarnate God who was born in Bethlehem and grew to be a great teacher, healer and friend. He was crucified and rose again, and somehow in that, through faith, we obtain eternal life. He will come again at the end of ages. The Holy Spirit empowers us to live in faith. Besides all that, It's critically important that we are students of the Bible.

I need to know those things, and more, if I am to live faithfully and to represent our faith accurately. So yes, there is place for knowing.

But oh, there is a so much wider place for not knowing. This is about humility and trust. Too many people claim to know more about God and God's will than what is given for humans to know. Too many speak with such certainty that the hard work of faith – trusting in the midst of doubt- never factors in.

I am so comforted by the idea that God is, and has, mysteries that I am not given to understand. It helps me keep things in perspective; it helps me let God be God. The deeper my trust in God grows, the more I am able to say, "it's a mystery."

We will never stop asking questions – it's the nature of our species. And our faith grows by wrestling with those questions – no doubt about it. But the nature of the Trinity? What will happen when Jesus returns? And the big question, why do bad things happen to good people? These things are mysteries, things for me to wonder about, but not to comprehend.

Often, when I begin my daily prayer, I start by saying names for God. It helps me remember who it is I am spending time with. I might say, Holy One, Creator, Redeemer, Lover of my Soul, etc. Two of my favorite of these names for God are Deep Mystery and Reckless Love. As long as I can trust the Reckless Love –and I do – I'm pretty content with the Deep Mystery.

Pastor Susan