

Retired But Not Tired

FEATURE STORY By Casimiro R. Nadela (The Freeman) Updated October 04, 2009 12:00 AM)

As I write this, I hear the sounds of the world — tv blaring, my soft musical selection playing, aroma of breakfast cooking, cars speeding, clouds passing by with the howling wind, people talking, among other sounds — all competing for my attention. It is very difficult to be alone in the modern world of ours.

Henry David Thoreau, a noted American writer, wrote in his book *Walden* — “I have three chairs in my little cabin, one chair is for society, one chair is for friends, and one chair is for solitude, for me.” Unfortunately for many of us, we have sat on the chair for society most of our lives and sometimes on the chair for friends. It is because we know no better. It is only lately that I have enjoyed sitting on the chair reserved for me — my chair of solitude. Now I understand why Jesus often invited His disciples to go away and be alone.

As I sit on my chair of solitude, I commune with myself. The peaceful sounds — soft music, rustling of the leaves, chirping of the birds, whisper of the wind — push the boisterous sounds of the world to unimportance and I begin to relax. Silence then unravels. My physical mind fades away and I start to listen with my soul. I hear the flutter of butterfly wings, the popping of flowers as they burst out in bloom, and then God appears. I do not pray to Him, but listen and converse with Him.

I am addicted to this chair now. Poets, writers, and artists need to sit on their chair of solitude to listen to their Creator and share to the world what their conversation with God was all about through their artistic works. You become an artist too as you sit in your own chair. This opportunity to commune with God is available to you all the time for your chair of solitude is there waiting for you. You only need to have that desire and to make a conscious effort to sit still. This is what I have come to know as personal prayer time. Of course this will not happen with a snap of your finger or with the abruptness of your conclusion to do it. There will be a lot of learning, understanding and letting go of personal baggage on allow the Spirit of God to lead you to this journey.

Many books have been written on techniques to attain this peace of mind. You hear about Yoga, Transcendental Meditation, Science of the Mind, Astral Travel and many cult practices. But I only need the BCBP teaching of daily Scriptural readings and personal prayer to reach this elusive state of being. I use the Scriptural readings and some learned prayers to condition myself for the experience and do my personal prayer imagining myself sitting on my chair of solitude — my very own. I do not jump out of bed and rush into the world; I stay in bed and converse with God. I get up and have my morning coffee, still in conversation with my Creator. Just like Mary, I listen to Him and reserve doing Martha’s things for the world later. If situation permits, I do my morning prayer walk with my walking stick and my dog. Since I walk with God, I come to appreciate the wonders of His creation and become one with nature. I consciously do not carry reading materials or cell phone so as not to be distracted from my communion with my God.

As I loop down towards my destiny with death, I am grateful to God for this opportunity to enjoy peace of mind. But I know that this opportunity does not happen only to old folks like me, who have time to spare. I sought this in my youth, but the alcohols, drugs and the sensuous media I used then blocked my chance to converse with my God. They only numbed my heart and led me to worship the god of my creation, appropriately described by Simon and Garfunkel in *Sound of Silence*. SOUND OF SILENCE Simon & Garfunkel

Hello darkness, my old friend;

I’ve come to talk with you again.

Because a vision softly creeping

Left its seeds while I was sleeping,

And the vision that was planted in my brain

Still remains within the sound of silence.

In restless dreams I walked alone,

Through narrow streets of cobblestone.

'Neath the halo of a street lamp,
I turned my collar to the cold and damp
When my eyes were stabbed by the flash of a neon light
That split the night, and touched the sound of silence.
And in the naked light I saw
Ten thousand people, maybe more.
People talking without speaking,
People hearing without listening,
People writing songs that voices never shared.
And no one dared disturb the sound of silence.
'Fools,' said I, 'You do not know
Silence like a cancer grows.
Hear my words that I might teach you,
Take my arms that I might lead you.'
But my words like silent raindrops that fell,
And echoed in the wells, of silence.
And the people bowed and prayed
To the neon god they made.
And the sign flashed out its warning,
In the words that it was forming.
And the sign said, 'The words of the prophets
are written on the subway walls
And tenement halls, and whispered in the sound of silence.'

We are told to go out and evangelize. What can we give? What can we tell? What experience can we share? Perhaps we need to find first our own chair of solitude, sit in it often, and only then can we tell as many people how wonderful the experience is. Then perhaps the people will listen to us and will meet their true God. And start to listen to the 'sound of silence'. (Source: <http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleid=511057>)