

*It is the beauty that comes out of pain which will connect us with the crucified God of Beauty.... We best “keep Providence” when we engage ourselves fully in finding and sharing our own inner beauty and the beauty of all creation.*

– Ruth McGoldrick, SP

Beauty and Crucifixion — what a powerful and yet highly paradoxical image! In another portion of Ruth’s response to Louis Roy’s article in Keeping Providence, she refers to the fact that people of Providence spend their lives in a “mix of well-being and woe.” So true!

During weeks past, we have often felt a part of both life and loss in Haiti following the earthquake. We have witnessed massive loss of life and we have rejoiced with the Haitians as persons are resurrected in the recovery process. We have noted a world response, often chaotic, yet in some strange ways coordinated as medical personnel from many countries save lives through field surgery. While the God of Providence does not intervene in stopping natural disasters, the pulse of a Savior beats throughout the universe, especially during hard times. As Providence people, we then are called to bring order out of chaos. The Haitians were clearly in touch with this Pulse of God as they fought to save their children, to find their loved ones and to bury their dead with the dignity which they deserved. The health care personnel moved in to address human suffering with compassion and skill.

And what have we done? Providence people mobilized to support this endeavor with both funding and personnel, where possible. The very real conundrum in terms of dealing with this type of tragedy is in our articulation of God’s care for us. Often, a minimum of words is best, when we stand in solidarity with others — friends, relatives, and strangers as we and they cope with tragedy. We know that the natural order contains chaos. The struggle for integration and acceptance is all about the God of Providence standing with us and about our own transformation. We are sometimes called to identification with the victims, helping them move toward survival and resurrection. Barbara Doherty SP once wrote that Providence persons do not speak Providence before its time. They speak only after discernment, prayer and the tests of prudence and wisdom. Wise advice! Also, perhaps we have a new “Providence textbook” written by the people of Haiti and their caregivers. What do we wish to add to this textbook?

As I write I am viewing a small bookmark which reads: “Providence cannot be defeated. God’s unending energy brings wholeness to all that is!”

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