

View from Grabbist, March 26

Dear all

I came across this quote recently, from over a century ago:

As for me, my bed is made : I am against bigness and greatness in all their forms, and with the invisible molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual, stealing in through the crannies of the world like so many soft rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, and yet rending the hardest monuments of man's pride, if you give them time. I am against all big organizations as such, national ones first and foremost; against all big successes and big results; and in favour of the eternal forces of truth which always work in the individual and immediately unsuccessful way, under-dogs always, till history comes, after they are long dead, and puts them on the top.

William James, in a letter

The way of Lent radically subverts how we tend to act when the way of 'greatness' is being glorified all around. The danger for us is to think that an even greater, opposing 'force for good' is the only hope for overcoming the mighty forces of evil we see writ large across the world, wreaking so much havoc and heartache. We simply collude with the delusion that 'might is right' if we continue believing the subliminal lie that 'righter is mightier'. Recall that Jesus said to his friends 'You want to be great? Be servant of all!' The manifestations of diabolical 'making great' that run rampant across our world aren't new. They're ancient, recurring routinely - as do the temptations to fight in kind, to try to overcome wickedness with an almighty victory for righteousness. That way, chaos and fiery disappointments lie. If we read history deeply, we see this again and again.

Let's instead find ourselves in the flow, in James' words, 'through the crannies of the world like so many soft rootlets'. Let's be mycelium of light and life, of indiscriminate kindness, goodness and peace, content to straddle invisibly through the humus without fanfare, without judgement, knowing that to sow the seeds of heaven on earth is long term work. Once in a while we may be visible publicly, absurd and foolish in the eyes of those who are still playing the games of might, right and greatness. But, like fleeting fungi fruiting in the forests, no sooner do we appear than we disappear in a puff, recklessly, with no concern for our reputation, sowing the seeds of life far and wide as we go....

Kenneth