

FROM THE DESK OF MARY SHARON . . .

Living in spiritually dangerous times

by Mary Sharon Moore

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You and I have entered into spiritually dangerous times. With a national economy and world economies in free fall, we are members of a society that now harvests the fruits of greed and exploitation. We are part of a culture that has fulfilled the warning of the prophet Hosea: When you sow the wind, expect to reap the whirlwind.

The economy which our culture has created, and for which our lives and insatiable appetites have become the necessary endless fodder, is very, very far from God's economy. We have lost our way, and collectively we're not far from blind panic.

The spiritual danger, for some, will be to turn away in anger from whatever god seems to have abandoned them. Others may forgo time for God as they press hard to come up with whatever they can to keep their households financially afloat, a roof over their heads, and the collection agencies at bay. But for many men and women of Christian faith, the subtle but truly corrosive spiritual danger will be to turn to God in fear. Why is fear so spiritually dangerous?

Quite simply, anxiety has no place in authentic relationship with God. Either you believe that God is really GOD, or you don't. Either you trust God to actually be GOD in your life, in this moment, or you don't. Trust is like hope, as St. Paul writes: No one hopes (or trusts) for what they already can see. "But if we hope (or trust) for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience" (Romans 8:24).

So where does the spiritual challenge of these tough economic times leave you and me? If these are spiritually dangerous times, they also are vocationally important times. You can expect that the needs of others will press in on you as your own circumstances shift with uncertainty. Still, the words of Jesus awaking from sleep on the storm-tossed lake ring true for us today: Do NOT be afraid. Do not let yourself go to that place of anxiety and fear.

He also said: I am with you to the end of the age.

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