



A weekly reflection by members
of the Precious Blood community

October 16, 2024

Gretchen Bailey, Companion

“If you are guided by the Spirit,
you are not under the law.” (Galatians 5:18)



Dancing with Waves

Some say Nature has laws. Others say that these laws are just descriptions of things we observe. Oppositely charged particles are attracted to one another, while similarly charged particles repel one another. We are born, we age, we return to earth, dirt which will become another generation of living beings.

Nature can be at once marvelous and merciless. On a recent visit to Indonesia, my husband and I spent hours each day visiting coral reefs. We boarded a small 18-foot wooden fishing boat with a tarp rigged over four posts for protection against sun and rain and an outboard motor fixed on the transom. One afternoon, the wind came up as we approached our destination on the windward side of a small island facing the open ocean. The waves were, for me, terrifying. The fisherman guided the boat to come head-on at the face of each wave, gunning the motor to rise to the crest, then cutting the motor as we descended into the depths of the trough, revving once again to climb the face of the next wave. I recited Hail Marys while we motored up and down walls of water, seeking a return path to the leeward side of the island. Looking at what must have been my wide-eyed face, he said, smiling, “See how I dance with the waves!”

If only I could dance with the Divine as he danced with waves, knowing the water, handling the engine speed, angling up each face, keeping the bow free, all to avoid capsizing our boat. He knew his partner. He knew his dance.

My husband and I attempted dance lessons twice. You must remember steps flow with your partner. All I remember is the instructor yelling from across the dance floor, “You have to let your husband lead!”

I have no desire to be at sea, alone, in a small boat with a 40-horsepower outboard and 12-foot waves. Yet sometimes, don't we live our lives as though we are in charge, navigating the roiling waters of a life? Every time we try to lead without asking God, “Which way?” we stumble. I can check off many of Paul's litany of the works of the flesh, having succumbed to most during my life. (Well, not orgies or sorcery unless you count that one time with a Ouija board when I was a teenager.)

Richard Rohr, in his book of the same name, refers to the Divine Dance as “a kind of cosmic sympathy with all things as we live and act through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ” and that we do this “with a mix of confidence and surrender.” He states that there is a Divine Economy, and that “In this Divine Economy all is useable, even our mistakes and sin.” He continues, “This message shouts from the cross!”

In the company of the Spirit, we step into the Divine Dance, allowing ourselves to be dipped, twirled, and spun, in Him, through Him, and with Him. It is freedom, not because we choose such, rather that we don't choose at all. With our “Yes!”, we get swept off our feet beyond the metrics of proscribed step and gesture. We are forgiven. New. We are not under the law but caught up in the wave of the fruit of the Spirit, and it is a good, exhilarating ride.

Gretchen Bailey is a Companion of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and recently retired from teaching. She continues to serve in many ministries in the San Francisco Bay Area. To learn more about Companions, [click here](#).

This weekly reflection is made available to all who are part of our Precious Blood family. Feel free to share it with others. Would you be willing to write a reflection? If so, please contact Vicky Otto at votto@pbspiritualityinstitute.org