

## I hope so

Have you ever had a few lines of a song whirling around in your head for no apparent reason. You are not sure why the words surfaced but you keep humming them. Not being a songster, I rarely have such moments. Instead, frequently, a quotation I heard or read somewhere pops into my head and it seeks time and space to digest its implications. One such quotation that has hijacked many moments of my life was a quotation from English monk and theologian, Sabastian More that says “hope is desire in the skilled hand of God.”

The “desire” part is the part that fascinates me. Desire is an integral part of our lives. We cannot live without it. In one sense, desire is a gift because it draws us into relationships that can be both enhancing and conflictual depending on the occasion and perspective.

We can desire wealth, power, status, recognition, health, friendship, completeness. This desire is not something we create. It is something we discover during our life and it draws us into ways of acting and reacting, as well as patterns of behaviour which help us achieve the goal of our desiring.

One of the worst things we can do is to take away someone’s desire to live. Many oppressive regimes and dictators have tried such with limited success. Often, they failed to realize the depth of a person’s desire to live deep within their psyche.

We are reminded of Nelson Mandela’s famous speech at his inauguration in South Africa when he said, “...Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It’s not just in some of us; it’s in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

Sebastian Moore spent his life trying to tease out and comprehend the whole idea of desire; the question of what human desire for God means, and what God’s desire for us really means. He wrote “Desire is love trying to happen”. It means we can be joyful. We can let go, through faith in Jesus, who reveals God to us: Our God who holds each one of us close, and desires us to let Him love us completely.

From our first slap on the rear end at birth to our last gasp of life on this earth, not just basic needs like air, food, shelter and safety, but our deepest desire for belonging and for being cherished and for being generative and fulfilled. Life without desire is unimaginable. Desire is so strong because desire, at its deepest level, is a reflection of our being created in the image of God. We have been created out of desire, the desire of God. It’s God’s desire to share this thing called life, and to be in union and communion – to be “one”– with God and with all that God has created.

God’s desire is not only to create us; he also wants to be close to us. He did so by becoming human, by being born in the most humblest of ways, in the most humblest of places, Bethlehem – ironically a place meaning “house of bread.” More ironically and simply, he shares himself continuously with his created with the Bread of Life, the Eucharist.

Moore indicates that we have a hard time accepting the idea of God creating us out of desire and desiring to be with us is that we have placed too much emphasis on the idea of God’s transcendence. This over-emphasis highlights our fear of intimacy, a fear of God getting too close to us.

He goes on to say that “In all religiousness there lurks the suspicion that we invented the story that God loves us.”

We all know the difference between the optimist and the pessimist as reflected through the example of a glass of water. Maybe, as far as God is concerned and we should be, the glass is always full; full of desire in the skilled hands of God.