

In Their Own Time ~ August 23, 2009

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; Isaiah 40:28-31 8-23-09

This morning's scripture reading, one which we have all heard at one time or another, spoke with particular strength to me during these past few weeks. More than ever I realized that things happen in their own time. We might devise all the schedules and plans we want to, but still, there are things that simply happen when the timing is right. When we learn this important lesson of life, we discover that we can be far happier humans.

No matter how we might want to push and pull things to fit our timeframe, it doesn't work. As one of you often tells me, God laughs at our little plans. So, instead of pushing and pulling and exasperating ourselves with life and its events, we are far better off taking time and patience with some of our projects, both great and small, and simply waiting until it is the time and the season for things to come to fruition.

Last December I had, in my infinite wisdom, come to the conclusion that the closest I would come to being any sort of grandparent would be to dogs and cats. I contented myself with that thought and knew that it was all right—I have never sought to order my children's lives according to my own desires, needs or plans. Of course, shortly following my acceptance of having a lot of grand-dogters, came the news that there was going to be a baby, if all went well. It did and Isabelle joined the family three weeks ago today—on her own timetable—a bit earlier than expected. So much for hospital schedules and doctor's best guesses. "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born..."

A friend of mine, knowing I would be very interested, sent me a little promo for the Museum of Russian Icons. He thought I might like to take in some of the events that will be offered in the fall. I am very certain he did not notice the little article on the back of the page he sent me. The article is entitled "The Tortoise Was Right." The author of this one page reflection is Karin Conrad (Boston Globe 8-09-09). The article is about the value of the slow growth of love and relationships.

She begins by noting, "My husband and I have one important thing in common: We're dawdlers. And I mean that in a good way. In a world of multi-taskers juiced up on Blackberrys zooming down life's highway, we're hanging out in a roadside diner, chatting up the waitress."

She goes on to mention that she married late, after having all the adventures she wanted or needed from life, and had a daughter at the age of 40. She and her husband took their time deciding on marriage and sustained a long-distance relationship. Now celebrating their 8th anniversary she pens, "I've heard there is a slow life movement, which celebrates putting the brakes on our collective rush to get wherever it is we're going and savor the fullness of the moment, whether we're chopping carrots, brushing our child's hair, or just dawdling. I'd like to speak to the virtues of slow love, in following your internal intuitive love clock even if it moves at a glacial pace, and relishing the sweetness of the real thing once you've got it..... there's something cool about having new love and babies right about when it hits you that your time is finite. We have an extra incentive to follow our smell-the-roses impulse and know we're not

wasting time when we hang out on the porch eating Popsicles, laughing and counting the cars that pass. One thing's for sure: Love needs time. Here in the slow lane, we're taking the scenic route and loving every minute."

This author understands that, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven a time to love. . . ." The tortoise is right---take your time and all will be revealed to you. Rush through life dwelling on superficial joys and pleasures and you may never truly see and understand what life is all about.

Friday, when I returned to Connecticut and the plane had finally taxied to the gate, everyone jumped up and began lugging the countless pieces of luggage they had carried on from over their heads and under their seats as soon as the pilot turned off the seatbelt sign. I was seated near the rear of the plane in a window seat. I book myself in an aisle seat when I have tight connections to make, usually in Detroit, and in a window seat when I am on the last leg of a flight. I don't jump up from my window seat unless the person beside me is incredibly fast and secures a space in the aisle for me. On Friday, there was a great rush to get off the plane and into the stifling humidity. I had moved from my seat to the one on the aisle and was waiting to move on out when a gentleman asked if I would like to step in line in front of him behind his wife. I told him I was in no hurry, I had learned a long time ago there is really not much for which to rush around. He nodded in agreement.

Perhaps, I have learned this lesson from my half broken never quite mended gimpy left ankle. When others are rushing around and past me I have to slow down and proceed at my own pace. Somehow or other, I arrive at the baggage claim at the same time as my luggage, unless the handlers are incredibly slow. I have none of the frustrations others have as they stand and wait and sigh and mumble. Blessings come in strange packages.

The author of Ecclesiastes was sometimes philosophical and sometimes cynical. Some of the things he wrote were not written to uplift but to acquaint us with some of the realities of life. When we can come to understand that there are some things that happen in God's time and not in our own, we can discover the joy of stepping back a bit, relinquishing the control some of us feel we need to have and wait for the season and the time to discover and enjoy our heart's desire and delight.

Amen