
Letter From the President

Many of us are on the verge of embarking on a new academic year. Hopefully after a relaxing, refreshing and rejuvenating summer we are filled with enthusiasm and hope for the year to come. We live in hope for the coming year to be a better time, the world to be a better place, that wars will cease and peace will reign. As much as this is our hope, it looks highly unlikely. Everyday the newspapers and media tell us of more wars, more deaths of civilians and military, more destruction of the environment. We must wonder: will the violence ever end?

As this academic year begins, we remember that just a few years ago we entered a new millennium. At the beginning of this century we listened to experts and futurists such as Faith Popcorn. She was the expert who coined many of the terms we use to describe our society. She coined the term “cacooning” in which the nuclear families would shroud themselves in privacy to create the ideal environment to survive. She coined another term for another new phenomenon called “anchoring.” This happens when families developed a spirituality for themselves and survival. Finally, Popcorn says, this new millennium was to be a time of “eve-olution.” It was to be an era to pursue spirituality, a transcendent world. It would be a century dedicated to the advancement of education, environment and ethics. It would be the new “Golden Age.”

The liturgy for the first of August has us reread *The Parable of the Weeds of the Field* in (Mt. 13:36-43). In this parable Matthew has Jesus tell us “The field is the world.” This is a very interesting statement, because it tells us the “field” is

not the Church, it is not our school, nor is it our library. It is “the world.” Faith Popcorn tells us that encapsulating ourselves into a family by “cacooning,” and separating ourselves from the problems of society, is not the answer. To fortify, embed and anchor our families alone in spirituality is not enough either. She is right when she tells us that an “eve-olution” is in place. We need to be other-directed, if we are to understand the Gospel correctly, and the other is “the world.” We have to be concerned about education, environment and ethics. We have to be concerned not only for ourselves and for our families, which is very important; we have to embrace “the field”—the world. We have to embrace the good and the bad and help to make all better.

Marshall McLuhan, the philosopher of communication, tells us, “the academic librarian must be a liberated artist, who sees his/her proper role in education as a ‘kochleffel,’ a ‘stirrer-up’ who carries on an unremitting struggle for freedom and the wide use of all available knowledge.” One way we do this is by providing access to the best the human spirit has achieved. We do this with the very best of resources both print and electronic. As St. Hugh of Lincoln, the prior of Witham said, “our books are our delight and wealth in time of peace, our offense and defense in time of war, our food when we are hungry, and our medicine when we are weak.” If we continue to do our jobs as acquirers and disseminators of the best of knowledge we will be a kochleffel, a “stirrer-up.” We will be the agents in our communities, who carry on the “eve-olution” in which hopefully the new era of spirituality, transcentents, and hope for the future of humanity will flourish.



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President