

Back in August of 2009 I shared on my blog something sad that had happened at the shop and it seems relevant to current events. Two women had come into the shop; one was looking to buy sage and learn how to cleanse her home. I didn't ask for details but she looked tired, sad and very thin - her companion was doing a good job of chatting and being cheerful in an effort to raise her friend's spirits (as any good friend would). At one point, they asked about psychic "protection" and I asked what Faith path they followed - they were both Catholic and were wearing crosses. I told them the best protection comes from their personal belief in the Divine - so, if they practiced Catholicism then it comes from the cross, holy water, receiving sacraments, etc. I suggested they hang a rosary from the corner of their and their children's beds, mark all doors with a cross using holy water, and pray to Mary for guidance with their children. About the time I finished my little talk, an older woman came into the shop and slowly walked around, taking it all in - front to back. Meanwhile, the three of us were standing at the front counter and the topic of conversation changed over to paranormal investigations. The chatty friend was telling me how much she enjoys watching the TV show "TAPS" - and as the older woman walked by, she stopped and whispered something in the ear of the other (sad) friend. She shrugged and gave a little smile as the older woman shook her head disapprovingly and walked out of the shop. I asked "Do you mind if I ask you what she just whispered to you?" and she told me, "She said that I should just put my faith in Jesus and forget about all this other crap".

Okay, then.

Of course, it was too bad she hadn't come in just a few minutes earlier and then she would have heard my little speech about Jesus, Mary and living your faith. Then again, if she was a fundamentalist Christian it wouldn't have mattered since they have problems with Catholics too. Many Catholics are unaware that most of the Christian Right does not approve of their Faith practices. Throughout the eleventh grade, I lived with my dad and his family in Vian, Oklahoma. The local Baptists (they were ALL Baptists) let me know at every possible opportunity that as a Catholic I did many bad things - for instance, nailing Jesus back up on the cross every Sunday and breaking an important commandment by bowing down and worshiping statues. Then there was the whole "eating flesh and drinking blood" thing which they had a real problem with. At one point, frustrated and tired of being asked if I had "Found Jesus" I snapped back "No - but if I do, I will tie a bell around his neck because YOU people keep losing him!" and walked away.

Oh well. In the words of comic writer Dave Barry: "People who want to share their religious views with you almost never want you to share yours with them".

I really had no friends in Oklahoma - and it was a lonely junior year in high school. But I did learn first-hand what it feels like to be a "Faith Minority" and THAT was a valuable lesson. It made it impossible for me to judge another based on their beliefs because I know exactly how it feels when someone does not understand WHY you believe what you

believe but presumes to damn you for it. And when one person tells another that their beliefs mean they are going to Hell, that is exactly what they are doing ... damning them. That's an awful lot of power for one person to have over another (an awful lot of power, period). I would think it is for the Divine to decide as far as who is going where, and why. Of course, there IS that one little line in the Bible - who said it? Oh, yes - it was Jesus. It is "Judge not lest ye yourself be judged."

But I digress.

According to statistics, more than 50 percent of Americans have a negative view of people who don't believe in their God. Buddha, Jesus, Krishna, Kwan Yin, Mohammed, White Buffalo Woman, Yahweh - all spoke of Divine Love . Why are we fighting over it? Why is one person's God better than another? What in God's Name is really going on?

"This hand is not the color of yours, but if you pierce it, I shall feel pain. If you pierce your hand, you also feel pain. The blood that will flow from mine will be the same color as yours. I am a man. God made us both"

- Chief Standing Bear, Ponca c1829 - 1908

God(dess) Bless Us All!

Laura