

*Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.*

At my age, which I won't reveal, I feel lost amid the technological changes (among others) that a current ten year old is adept at with ease. I mean I lived in the days of a mimeograph machine with stencils and a mechanical typewriter with an adequate supply of corrective white-out and brush . . . now as far gone as a five cent hot dog. Reminds me of Alice in Wonderland.

Alice too was bewildered. After falling down that rabbit hole, nothing she experienced conformed to the norms she knew. Animals talked and were ill mannered; four times five equaled twelve; London was the capital of Paris. Her own size changed from tiny to tall and back again. Caterpillars were condescending. She felt absolutely lost and wished to find her way back to her world of Victorian absolutes. When she saw a Cheshire Cat perched in a tree, she asked: "Cheshire Puss, would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" The Cat grinned and said, "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to?" Frustrated, Alice replied: "I don't care much where!" "Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat. When you're lost in space and time selecting a direction to go gives you pause.

Or take my experience of a visit to Italy. When first approaching the Italian town of Perugia, I became nervous - because Perugia is a mountain town, its narrow streets ascending to its center all atwist like a plate of linguini. Our hotel was at its apex and I closely consulted Perugia's map and made a wrong turn. Now I had no idea where I was. And when my meandering led me to a tunnel, panic struck. I backed off and returned to the maze behind me. Only when Jane saw a sign saying "Centro" did I yield to its enticement and let the car make its roller coaster way up and down and around - until we exited into Perugia's top piazza - right outside our hotel! For two more days (after excursions) I went through a similar trepidation negotiating Perugia's labyrinth, yet always reached our hotel. Then it hit me: God was teaching me to wing it: *Throw the map away. Go with the flow. Let the wide-open piazza come to you!*

Sometimes you, too, may feel lost like Alice. We're so dependent on familiar guidelines, things like longitude, latitude, road maps, ready-made catechism answers that mean this and not that – everything must be correct as in mathematics. We like to know precisely where we are and where we're headed - because we don't like being lost in the here or hereafter. And yet the Voice that prompted ancient Abraham to launch the history we know as the Bible (and a very meandering history it is!) simply said: *Leave your country and your kin and your Father's house and go to the land I will show you.* The Voice didn't say where and the big thing about Abraham is that he didn't ask; he pulled up stakes and stepped into tomorrow, the unknown.

Indeed at my age I can now see how my life, as a *fact*, has really been something of a maze, indeed amazing in keeping with the saying of Christ: *whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever lets go for my sake will save it* – which might be translated nowadays as "whoever cannot change his mind will lose it but whoever can change his mind will save it." The Gospel word for such an experience is *metanoia*, which means: change your way of thinking or wake up, open up to the mystery you are and can be.

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