Is “just fine” good enough? Marie Onwubuariri, Regional Executive Minister

I have consciously considered, intellectually and practically, the question that titles this article—often! It comes to mind again in this new year as the region’s theme of transformation is deep in my soul. As someone who was explicitly raised by hardworking parents to not settle for average or “just getting by” when it came to things with lasting import, as one who was formed in the possibilities of “the Big Apple (i.e New York City),” as someone inspired by prophetic preachers and seasoned leaders, and as someone who embraces the complexity of the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I have and continue to pose various forms of this question to fellow believers: is ‘just fine’ good enough?"

In this question there is a tension between the theology of ‘saved by grace, not by works’ and ‘Be still and know that I am God’ in the one hand, and in the other hand a belief that the status quo is not God’s perfect will and the posture of just getting by denies the power of our faith.

Placing this question in the context of the stewardship of mission of the Church, and with Romans 12:1-2 still a guiding scripture my answer is “No!” Emphatically! Furthermore, it is not grace OR change; not stillness OR power. Transformation takes creative tension and expectant dissonance, deep understandings of God, and redefined acts of “being” the Church. We need each other for rootedness, collaboration, growth, and yes—transformation.

Some things I have heard among others in our region:

“[Nothing] anymore without including the next generation;”
“Lead a revolution;” “Listen…; “Be co-collaborators with God;” “We are building toward something not yet known…”

Yes, transformation is still at times elusive, slow, painful. Many have been at this work for some time; you may be weary. Yet, we have just celebrated this truth: The coming of Christ is transformation personified! So, take rest. Refresh. And let us continue in the Holy Spirit’s new winds…

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