



Conflict and a Christian Life

Sam Portaro

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From the earliest days of recorded history, conflict has been an integral part of human life. Although conflict and crisis are painful, they are visible and vital signs of the perpetual work of the church and society. Viewed in this light, they become sources of growth and gifts to be pressed into service.

The trouble with Jesus was?and is?that he stands in the midst of conflict, and allows the conflict actually to live in him even though it tears him apart, in order that new life might be born. The trouble with Jesus was?and is?that he invites us to follow where he has led.

Newly revised and expanded, this book is not a how-to manual for problem-solving, but a hopeful and creative reflection on the positive aspects of conflict in our relationships and institutions, as demonstrated throughout scripture in the life and ministry of Jesus, the early church, the church today, and within ourselves. For those willing to embrace conflict and the work that it requires, the result is a celebration of the community that God has given us.

Conflict is frightening. It threatens our sense of control and upsets our notions of order. It touches our vulnerability and reveals uncomfortable realities. Therefore, we tend to deny conflict, or we try to manage it, tame it. In fantasies of ultimate control, we banish conflict altogether. . . .

But the ways of God in the real and quite tangible world in which I live are obviously not the same as my ways. In this world, I am rarely in agreement with others and God obviously tolerates much more untidiness than I find comfortable. This conflict, which is with me every hour and becomes quite apparent hundreds of times a day, arouses fear within me. I want to be in control, and yet I cannot be in control.

from *Conflict and a Christian Life*

This edition features a study guide designed by educator Amanda Millay Hughes, making it a valuable resource for group study by vestries, parish staffs, adult education groups, and anyone wishing to gain greater facility in negotiati



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