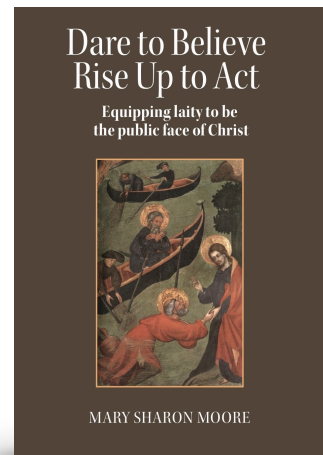


Quotable Quotes from
DARE TO BELIEVE, RISE UP TO ACT
Equipping laity to be the public face of Christ

by
Mary Sharon Moore



The church, like the world, may be in turmoil,
but this does not absolve me from being,
nonetheless, the public face of Christ. (p. 3)

My life is not my own, just as your life is not your own. Perhaps we
don't hear this often enough. Or perhaps we hear it, but ... we might have
beans in our ears. Or we may simply be too distracted with a thousand other things. (p. 4)

I do not see our times as a problem to be fixed—although there are
plenty of problems, and they beg for our attention and our urgent resolve
to bring wisdom, compassion, resources, and just action.

I see our times as an invitation—God's invitation to make real, in our time and place,
the Land of the Rightside Up, the vision of God and the reign of God. (pp. 4-5)

We are built for connection in our world, and we are baptized and anointed
in the holy Spirit of the risen Christ in order to infuse our world with grace and good,
with divine justice and peace, and to live in this world in ways that make our lives
the answer to our prayer: *Your kingdom come!* (p. 19)

Because church exists for the sake of the world, we need the world as much as
the world needs us. Knowingly or not, the world constantly calls forth the
gifts and holy imagination which we have been given, to make present now,
in our times, the reign of God.

I need my community, the town where I live, as much as my town,
my community, needs me. It matters *that* I show up, and it matters
how I show up. It matters that I invest not only my resources but
real flesh in my community, because I know Whose flesh I invest. (p. 19)

When I go out to encounter my world, I go out from the front doors of my church
on Sunday morning, or on weekdays from my little apartment at the east edge of downtown.
But in truth I go out to encounter my world *from the place of indwelling in the heart of God.* (p. 25)

Jesus trusts us to love and care for the world as faithfully as he would.
We stand in his place, you and I, to make of this world the
pleasing offering which he makes to his Father. (p. 26)

But the truth is: the world does not need more “parishioners.” It desperately needs—whether it can name it or not—men and women of Christian faith who *dare* to believe Jesus, who *dare* to believe his Father’s vision for this world, and who *rise up to act*. (p. 30)

As followers of Jesus our politics is the way that we are in the world, one conversation, one purchase, one pledge, one engagement, one commitment at a time, which expresses to others our vision of how we can best live together, for the good and flourishing of all.

As followers of Jesus, even our lifestyle is a political statement which expresses what we value as a moral way of being in the world. Our lifestyle either enables us to show up, unencumbered, wholehearted, as responsible members of the body of Christ, or not. (p. 35)

Every time I dare to believe what Jesus is saying, and accept that he is serious about the demands of discipleship in the reign of God, I feel impelled to be the public face, the public presence, of Christ in the world I touch. (p. 37)

As the public face of Christ, you and I as laity have always had the obligation to scrutinize the signs of the times through the lens of the Gospel, to see the world through a moral lens that brings us a discomfoting clarity. (p. 37)

Scrutinizing the signs of the times through anything other than the lens of the Gospel—say through self-serving opinion, or partisan rhetoric—is not scrutinizing at all. Self-serving opinion and shrill rhetoric is the way we entrench our hearts and minds in false hope and in the sick satisfaction of vilifying anyone who is not “us.” (p. 37)

How easily we opt for the myth of our aloneness, for our tightly sealed independence from the rest of society, rather than claim the narrative of Christian community filled with the power of the Spirit of the risen Lord. (p. 47)

We do not have to settle for human anguish, especially when it is someone else’s.
Nor should we settle for greed, especially when it is our own.

Every one of us is walking around with an interior wellspring, a vital force strong enough to shake loose and mobilize the vast reserves of money and every other form of wealth that will get the heavy lifting done. (p. 50)

Like Peter, every one of us is invited, many times over the span of our lifetime, to walk toward Jesus, in the unexpected circumstance, the perilous and unrehearsed moment. ...

We are not meant to collapse in panic and sink. We are invited by the Lord himself into expressions of courage and professions of faith in the most chaotic moment, when we feel least ready, least equipped, least courageous, when it seems that the torrents and waves will completely overwhelm us. (p. 73)

Faith, mature faith, I discover, is not so much adherence to a set of beliefs as a readiness to step out of the boat, at Jesus' invitation, and respond to *this* challenge, *this* particular invitation, to live vulnerably, and to act courageously. (p. 97)

Faith, I discover, is a readiness to act. Not because I know how things will go, but because I trust the One who calls me.

I *dare* to believe that the flesh of the crucified Lord is embedded in my flesh.
I *dare* to believe that the blood of the risen Christ flows in my veins.

I *dare* to believe. And therefore I am free to rise up to act. Free to believe that, in the words of Pope Francis, "everything is connected," and I am free to be a living part of the connectedness of all these things. (p. 98)

Freedom to rise up to act does not depend on the right circumstances, but on the courage to be vulnerable, the courage to take Jesus' invitations seriously. The courage to believe that he deeply wills our good, our growth, our audacity to trust as he trusts, and therefore to come to fullness of life in him.

And we always know the magnitude of the invitation by the intensity of our pushback. (p. 98)

For lay men and women, anointed in the Holy Spirit, rising up to act is our *way of being in the world*, simply and courageously living the whole of the Gospel at every turn. How do you do this?

You hoist yourself out of the boat, first one leg and then the other, as the Master has taught you. You fix your eyes on the One who calls you, and then you do the next obvious thing. ...

"Rising up to act" is what it means to follow Jesus. It is the courageous step, the step you would rather not take. Take it anyway. (p. 99)

This is why discipleship can seem so terrifying and unappealing: The Gospel will change me, if I let it, if I allow myself to respond to the invitation to lifelong conversion of heart which is the Gospel's deepest work. (p. 104)

DARE TO BELIEVE, RISE UP TO ACT, along with Mary Sharon Moore's other titles, is available on the Store page at marysharonmoore.com
For **bulk order discounts**, email marysharonmoore@gmail.com

Thank you for supporting Mary Sharon's evangelizing ministry!