

On Life and Meaning

MARK PERES

Episode 2 – Carlos Salum – Theaters of Purpose

Two Cathedrals and the Enlightenment

And now a personal word,

When I hear Carlos speak and reveal his own hummingbird mind, I'm reminded of the great free thinkers of the Enlightenment who dared to know. In 2013 I wrote a column for a magazine called Nfocus reflecting on my own journey of freethinking. Here is a new version of that column for this podcast.

I recently watched an old episode of 'The West Wing.' The episode is called the 'The Two Cathedrals' and it won an Emmy and critical praise as "one of the best episodes in the history of American television." You may have seen it. In it, President Bartlett, played by Martin Sheen, remembers his days in prep school, the cathedral of his youth, while attending a funeral service at the National Cathedral, the cathedral of his later years. We see a direct connection between the experiences that shaped him when he was young and the values that guide him in middle age.

I have my own two cathedrals that dare me to know: Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, where I attended college many years ago, and Johnson & Wales University in Charlotte where I teach as a college professor today. Rollins prepared me to make my way in the world. Johnson & Wales is where I encourage others to fully realize themselves in community today.

At Rollins I studied history, philosophy and the arts. My professors modeled curiosity and engagement. I became eager to serve. Rollins cultivated my best instincts and aspirations.

After Rollins, I went to law school, clerked for a federal appellate judge, and joined a law firm. The lessons I learned in college and in law school prepared me intellectually for a legal career, but also led me to question whether I would ever be fulfilled as an attorney. I met a woman who would become my wife. We talked about living a life that would be more authentic, more creative and entrepreneurial. We soon had our beautiful daughter and it was then that I left the law.

The Franciscan friar Richard Rohr says the journey of life is from our false self to our true self. Since leaving the law many years ago I have sought to discover and express my true self. Today I teach courses on leadership and moral philosophy. I am interested in

what is good and what it means to live fulfilled lives. And so this podcast talking with remarkable people about the lives they lead. When we think freely, when we learn and serve, when we support each other in joy and with the courage to understand, we dare to know.

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