

COMMUNION

BEING: WHO AM I REALLY?

We have the joy of being made from dust and clay as well as divine breath (Genesis c2). We are the unity of body, mind and spirit. We are called to venture upon the journey of inwardness, walking to rhythmic beat of the divine heart at the core of our being.

Hindu spirituality speaks of the journey deep into the 'cave of the heart' there to discover the Divine Presence. The English country parson speaks of plunging into the cloud of unknowing there to know beyond knowledge. The Carmelite way speaks of climbing the Mountain to be transfigured or entering into the Interior Castle to find the King. Jesus undertook this journey – in the self-emptying of the incarnation, in being carried to the Temple to be acclaimed the Light of the Nations and Glory of Israel – not without cost! In journeying through the discovery of adolescence, finding a home in the Father's House. In the trek to the Jordan River and the breakthrough of the Spirit. And then into the desert! Before His 'going out' – to the poor and broken, the despairing and hungry – there is this 'going in'. Without inwardness there is no authentic mission, no true 'being for others', just the loss of self in a driven and faithless activism.

Eric Fromm defines the human person as a 'Freedom for Love'; the Judaeo-Christian tradition believes passionately that we are made in the 'image and likeness of God' – a God 'Who is Love'.

The inner person calls us to enter the cave of our hearts there to dialogue with the Divine – a dialogue of silent presence. Our contemporary world so often seduces us into superficiality or prizes only power, wealth, success and the sovereignty of the intellect: God delights in our drinking from the well of love that the Spirit creates deep within our inner cave. The Russian tradition of prayer speaks of the Mind sinking into the Heart and from that place 'in the Heart' being attentive to God – not an anti-intellectualism, but a nourishing of that within us that is beyond the intellect and therefore informs the intellect with a deeper wisdom.

Prayer, the prayer of stillness and silence, the prayer of being and gazing, the prayer of being and being with – this prayer immerses us into the Divine Mystery, the Cloud of Unknowing. This prayer leads us to our true self, our real humanity – our new humanity. From this Centre we can begin to radiate love, breath love into our torn world. The world may never know, never realise – but the world becomes a more loving place because you have gone to the Well in the Cave of the Heart and there drunk deeply of love – love to be poured out as Jesus did.

So abandon yourself to this inner journey – so that journeying inward to God and Self, you might journey outward to your sister, your brother, your world with greater humanity, deeper love and more joyous hope. Jesus sends his disciples (us) out into our world, but without this inner journey there can be no Christian Mission – and without Mission and Service the journey inwards decays into an obsessive God-greedy alienating luxury. May the God of endless loving always be in our Going out and our Coming in.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

Ephesians 3: 14-21

This then is what I pray, kneeling before the Father from whom every fatherhood in heaven and on earth takes its name. In the abundance of his glory, may he, through his Spirit, enable your inner self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then planted in love and built on love, with all God's holy people you will have the strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; so that knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you may be filled with the utter fullness of God.

Glory be to him whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine ...

Reflections from the parish of St Nicholas of Tolentino

