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The Divine Dance (Matthew 28.16-20)

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In a contemplative life, how does one relate to God the Holy Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons, one God?

One meditates, releases thoughts, and ideas and images, is still, open, listening, but is that all? I meditate two or three times a day, as a beginner, returning again, and again to my Mantra, and before, and afterwards, so many words. Words, highlight the silence. Silence highlights, and deepens the words, the conversation, but my prayer is mostly silent these days.

Jan Richardson draws us in deeper:

The Trinity is not merely an idea to be grasped but a mystery to be experienced and a relationship, to be entered into.

That's what meditation is about, entering into that mystery.

What Christ desires most for us to grasp, Richardson says, is the love of God: the love that sent Christ into the world to show us the face of God; the love that claims us and calls us; the love that invites us to enter into relationship with the One who dwells in mystery yet seeks to know us in the midst of everyday life; the love that drenches us and draws us into new life.¹

I experience God on my morning walk as I listen to what I see and hear. I know God in the single Pomegranate on a bare bush, glistening in the fog. I experience God in the rare "aha", moments with friends and strangers, and those who come to me for spiritual direction. I experience God in reading the Scriptures, hearing a story afresh.

This last week, I spent time with someone who shared his story with me, a story of God's unexpected, enticing call, and my heart was moved.

Have you ever known God in the beauty of a sunset or sunrise, in the eclipse of the moon, in holding a newborn child, in the beauty of a rose, in the dying moments of a loved one? Sometimes we are transported somewhere else in our spirits. Sometimes we are fully present. Sometimes we enter the heart of wonder, the centre of love.

Albert Einstein, said:

"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. [The one] to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: [their] eyes are closed."

Yet, in meditation, mostly I feel nothing. I am there, and wander off in my mind, and come back again and again, being present to love, to mystery.

¹ <https://paintedprayerbook.com/2008/05/12/trinity-sunday-a-spiral-shaped-god/>

Once, on retreat, I found myself lying face down on the floor, feeling so unworthy beside the wonder and majesty of God. I lay there, then heard inside myself the words 'get up, feed my sheep'.

'What?' I asked 'me?', I said.

'Yes you, especially you, feed my sheep, I love you'.

One could explain such an experience in many ways. For me, it was an encounter with the divine. It changed my life.

So my life and my relationship with God is both contemplation and action. I remember once on a retreat at Douglas Park, I realised I needed to dance. Silence and stillness were not enough. My spiritual director organised a room for me, where I could move, so I moved between expressing my prayer in my body with movement and song, and also waiting in silence, emptiness, in nothingness, repeating my mantra.

So why do I tell you all this? On this Feast of Trinity? I suppose I am just laying out some of my experience of the fullness of God, the Holy Trinity-the divine dance of relationship between God-father/mother/creator, God -the Son, Redeemer, Saviour, friend, and God, Holy Spirit -the go-between, the advocate, the thread that binds it all together.

Jan Richardson invites us to look for the presence of the God who seeks us with constant love, God who exists as a community and invites us to intertwined lives,² The God who also says 'I am with you always', invites us to let down our guard and open our hearts to relationship with the holy one.

So many of us find meditation difficult, and countercultural, but for me, it is an integral part of the whole picture. It stills my body and soul to receive, to open so that at other times when I use words or my body there is a receptiveness to the divine that might not have been there, otherwise, a tuning, a honing.

How do I relate to God? And how does God relate to God's self?

Trinity is a way to try and explain that.

There's awe, there's wonder there's silence and there's relationship, the Divine dance within the Godhead, and within us, the thread that connects.

Richard Rohr and Mike Morrell in their collaborative book, *The Divine Dance: the Trinity and your transformation*, make the intriguing comment that if we take the Trinity seriously we have to say

In the beginning was the Relationship". God is a relational being – God as Relationship within God's own nature, and that relationship extends outward to all creation, not just human beings.³ This speaks into Reconciliation Week, of course.

Wiradjuri Author and journalist Stan Grant, spoke of love and relationship on Q&A a week or so ago, and in *Statements from the Soul, the moral case for the Uluru statement from the heart*, he writes as a first nation man:

We could not allow those who would crush us to steal our love. This is our resistance.

² <https://paintedprayerbook.com/2008/05/12/trinity-sunday-a-spiral-shaped-god/>

³ <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/weekly-worship/monthly/2020-06-june>

And how we longed for Love. How we loved each other. How we loved even those who wronged us. In that yearning for love, even when the soul ceases to love, we kept open the possibility of God's return.

That is Simone Weil's profound teaching: that God, forsakes us, departs from the world, but leaves a trace – the soft touch – in our capacity for love. If we are to find God, love is our way home.⁴

Grant continues:

The contemporary Croatian theologian Miroslav Volf writes that, in the Holy Trinity – the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit – we find love and reconciliation, and unconditional embrace of humanity .⁵

Grant says that the essence of the Uluru statement is to heal us. To face the truth of our past, not with vengeance, not to erase, but to remember rightly. To put all our souls at rest. It speaks of voice, treaty, and truth. It is the cry of the afflicted, who have suffered yet respond with limitless love⁶.

Lawrence Freeman says:

God is the balance of love. The image of the Trinity is the most profound symbol of the Christian life. It shows us the dynamic balance of love, the giving of love, the receiving of love, and the ecstasy of love in the Spirit. ..Learning to love ourselves, which is the first step in our entry into this balance of love, requires simply that we learn to be still, that we learn to accept ourselves, to know ourselves and to allow ourselves to be led beyond ourselves through stillness⁷.

Rowan Williams ponders,

Knowing the Trinity is ...where contemplation and action become inseparable.

(The Trinity avows that no matter what and in whatever circumstances, God will be there in a relationship of unconditional love which comes from the heart of the Trinity.)

In all our living, the presence of God persists. "With you always", Jesus said.

'We will wear you down with our love' says Stan Grant, as God the Holy Trinity might also say. Maybe that could be our mantra too this Trinity, We will wear you down with our love'

(I recently heard this translation of the beginning of John's gospel:

John 1:1-1-3, 9-14

It all arose out of a conversation,
conversation within God, in fact the conversation was God.
So, God started the discussion, and everything came out of this, and nothing happened without consultation.

⁴ Page 23 *Statements from the Soul, the moral case for the Uluru statement from the heart.*
edited by Shareen, Morris and Damian Freeman, La Trobe University Press, Collingwood, Vic, 2023

⁵ *ibid.*, p29

⁶ *ibid.*, p31

⁷ <https://us4.campaign-archive.com/?u=c3f683a744ee71a2a6032f4bc&id=6a49ac1943>

The subject of the conversation, the original light, came into the world, the world that had arisen out of his willingness to converse He fleshed out the words but the world did not understand.

He came to those who knew the language, but they did not respond. Those who did became a new creation (his children), they read the signs and responded.

These children were born out of sharing in the creative activity of God. They heard the conversation still going on, here, now, and took part, discovering a new way of being people. To be invited to share in a conversation about the nature of life, was for them, a glorious opportunity not to be missed.⁸⁾

⁸ English translation: Clive Scott. From the original 15th C Latin translation by Erasmus of Rotterdam