

Fourth Sunday of Lent



One of the Dalai Lama's heroes, he says, is a Belfast man who, when he was a boy returning from school one day, was shot and blinded for life by a British soldier. When Richard Moore returned home from hospital his mother took him aside to tell him two things. First, that he would never see again and secondly that he must never hate the British. On one of his visits to Belfast organized by the Community the Dalai Lama met Richard and learned how he had recently started a charity for children suffering from violence and conflict. He was a living witness to what the teachers of non-violence in all traditions insist – that it is possible, however impossible it seems, to transcend the instinctive reactions of hatred and revenge that arise and usually master us after we have suffered at the hands of others.

The most important way of achieving what seems impossible is to see it. Once seen and experienced anything, however out of reach it appears, enters the realm of possibility. To see in this way we have to close our eyes to the illusory images that actually indicate a spiritual blindness.

When in the gospels Jesus heals the blind - the man blind from birth or the blind beggar Bartimeus - he is not working at the physical level alone. With their sight restored the men come to see with a clarity and vividness that fills them with the courage and decisiveness that only the vision of reality can awaken in us. In both cases they follow him.

Meditation is a way of faith and a way of vision simultaneously. As faith deepens, vision becomes clearer; and when we see vividly enough we have already changed our direction. The actual instant of change – like that of a resurrection from the dead - is always hidden in the moment when the degree of vision reaches the critical point. We can never see God as an object but only by a participation in God's vision of us that – as our ego reluctantly admits – is not the end of the story but part of an infinitely larger picture than we can imagine.

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