

## Friday of Lent Week 3



He instructed them to take nothing for the way beyond a stick. No bread, no pack, no money in their belts. They might wear sandals but not a second coat. I often think of this as I pack my second bag for a long flight and throw in books I won't have time to read and all the many last minute 'just in case' items that defy common sense.

From the first traumatic separations of our human existence the psyche craves predictability, security and control.

This craving is often in contest with a much deeper elemental drive, of the spirit, to growth, expansion and transformation in union. The age-old battle between ego and self.

Modern social conditioning massively favours the former. Our social economy is geared to acquisition and private ownership rather than towards sharing and simplicity. The hoarding instinct becomes rampant in some individuals and cultures, but few of us are quite free of it. Meditation is such a potential social revolutionary force because it exposes the deceptions of this conditioning and shows us from within what it means to be free. Free not to consume ad nauseam but to give with joy.

The mantra reveals the joy of non-possessiveness that is the meaning of the first Beatitude, the program for sustainable happiness in Jesus' teaching: Happy are the poor in spirit for theirs is the reign of God.

The poverty of the mantra is all we need. Discovering it is awakening to life lived in the presence of God with the mindfulness of Christ.

Discovering this is the essential discovery of life, the personal equivalent to discovering the human genome, a new continent or a new dimension to the universe. Such discoveries call for celebration. The problem with religion is that we remember and pass on the celebrations but forget the discovery. Meditation is the exploring, life is the celebrating. Religion is no more

than the ritual reminder of this.

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