

Thursday of Lent Week 1



Habits give us a strong sense of who we are. But we wrongly assume that our 'life' is natural and to be taken for granted. Of course it isn't and we shouldn't. Our life can be turned upside down and inside out in the blink of an eye. All our neural pathways implode and break up and we have to begin all over again. We 'rebuild our life' as habits are literally re-installed in our hurting brains and bodies.

In addition to these crises, which knock us sideways and sometimes from which we never recover, there is metanoia: what Jesus means by 'Repent and believe the good news.

'Meta: change (before and after); noia (from the Greek word nous, for perception, mind or understanding. Our techno-culture has excessively intellectualized and rarefied the meaning of 'mind'. Meditation restores balance to the full range of our consciousness and brings meaning back into focus as a total experience, not just as a verbal definition or a formula.

Outside of relationship what we call meaning is merely a snapshot of reality. Through meditation, the central role of relationship in understanding who we are is restored, firstly by working on our relationship with ourselves.

The noia part comes from the beautiful Greek word nous. Apart from being a favourite name for new IT companies and a philosophy journal, it means a lot of things - like perception and understanding and intelligence (though not IQ). Perhaps the street English version, pronounced 'nowse', which means more or less 'common sense' comes closest. As a boy I remember first hearing the word from a fruit stallholder in Portobello Market who was saying of someone 'he ain't got no ***** nowse, 'as he??

To change our nous - or get some if sadly we really don't have any - means action. Action directed towards contemplation. This involves raising ourselves from the soporific state of habituation, waking up, leaving the crowd (the chanting crowd and the crowd of our mental distractions).

There are plenty of slow ways of doing this, most of which involve many delays, putting off the moment of change for as long as possible.
And there?s meditation?

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