The World Community for Christian Meditation

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May 29 Readings

From John Main OSB, ?The Christian Crisis,? THE PRESENT CHRIST

(New York: Crossroad, 1991), pp. 74-76.

[. . .]To become spiritual we have to learn to leave behind our official religious selves?that is, to leave behind the Pharisee that lurks inside all of us?because, as Jesus has told us, we have to leave behind our whole self. All images of ourselves coming as they do out of the fevered brain of the ego, have to be renounced and transcended if we are to become one with ourselves, with God, with our brethren?that is, to become truly human, truly real, truly humble.

Our images of God must similarly fall away. We must not be idol-worshippers. Curiously, what we find is that they fall away as our images of self fall away, which suggests what. . .we always guessed anyway, that our images of God were really images of ourselves. In this wonderful process of coming into the full light of Reality, of falling away from illusion, a great silence emerges from the centre. We feel ourselves engulfed in the eternal silence of God. We are no longer talking to God or worse, talking to ourselves. We are learning to be ?to be with God, to be in God. [. . .]

On the spiritual journey it takes more energy to be still than to run. [M]ost people spend so much of their waking hours rushing from one thing to another that they are afraid of stillness and of silence. A certain existential panic can overtake us when we first face the stillness. . . .But if we can find the courage to face this silence, we enter into the peace that is beyond all understanding.

No doubt it is easier to learn this in a balanced and stable society. In a turbulent and confused world there are so many more deceptive voices, so many calls for our attention. But the Christian vision is uncompromising in its sanity, its rejection of extremism, in its invitation to each of us to have the courage to become ourselves and not merely to respond to some image of ourselves that is imposed upon us from outside. [. . .]

What each of us must learn in the experience of meditation is that the power for the pilgrimage is in fact inexhaustibly present. It takes only one step of faith for us to know that from our own experience. [And] the important thing to remember is that one faltering but

actual step is more valuable than any number of journeys performed in the imagination.

Meditate for Thirty Minutes. Remember: Sit down. Sit still and upright. Close your eyes lightly. Sit relaxed but alert. Silently, interiorly, begin to say a single word. We recommend the prayer phrase "Maranatha." Recite it as four syllables of equal length. Listen to it as you say it, gently, but continuously. Do not think or imagine anything spiritual or otherwise. Thoughts and images will likely come, but let them pass. Just keep returning your attention ? with humility and simplicity to saying your word in faith, from the beginning to the end of your meditation.

After Meditation, Charles Bukowski, "about competition," Sifting Through the Madness for the Word, the Line, the Way (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), p. 75.

about competition

the higher you climb
the greater the pressure.

those who manage to
endure
learn
that the distance
between the
top and the
bottom
is
obscenely
great.

and those who
succeed
know
this secret:
there isn't
one.

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