The World Community for Christian Meditation

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Tuesday of Lent Week 2

A family gets into the car just after sunrise for a long trip. When they arrive at the end of the day the child gets out and looks up at the sky and says ? wow, the sun came with us!?

A significant stage in psychological development is what is called the discovery of ?object permanence?. This is when we realise that things exist even when we are not present. Until then our egocentrism is so strong that we are naively convinced that everything exists only because it related to my own existence.

The long, slow and painful process of separation begins as early as the age of six months and reaches a crisis in the next twelve months. It begins to ease at twenty-four months as the ego develops enough strength to handle this excruciating but inescapable reality.

The instinct to cling and control stays with us, however, usually long into old age. And so, our minds and feelings are often felt to be like battlefields between the opposing forces of security (belonging) and danger (separation). Sometimes we never learn: then we die in great distress and inflict much suffering on those we are separating from. We owe it to those we love to let them go as early as possible in the relationship.

This is an area where psychology and spirituality greatly overlap. Separation becomes detachment when it is willingly embraced. This willingness arises from the insight that reality is better served by dispossession and letting go than by clinging and possessiveness. A merely intellectual understanding of this truth cannot survive the power of emotion involved in letting go.

Meditation is a deep and integral acknowledgement of this truth. As soon as we start the practice it familiarizes us incrementally, day by day, with the process of letting go. We start by letting go of our thoughts. We end by letting go of our selves. Meditation is at the heart of human maturity. It opens the door we need to pass through, into the fullness of life.

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