

Tuesday Lent, Week 5



It is difficult to distinguish the important from the trivial, the eternal from the transient. Or to put it another way it is hard to see the important in the trivial and the eternal in the transitory. The ability to see both the distinction and the connection is faith.

If we are deficient in faith the symptoms will be a sense of always missing something, living too much in nostalgia, fearing that we may miss the next opportunity. We wish we had been more awake, more alert and more present. This experience of wakefulness and presence is at the heart of the teaching of Jesus on prayer. It is also expressed in the Haiku poetry of Zen which in the simplest form tries to give a taste of reality contemplated rather reality conceptualized:

*Snow/ falls on snow /and remains silent.
Walking /the dog you meet/ lots of dogs.*

Awareness is what makes significance. The purpose of meditation and of Lent is to cleanse the doors of perception and 'restore to health the eye of the heart by which God is seen.' The first step is to calm the agitated mind which prevents the eye of the heart from functioning. In fact we do not have two kinds of eyes. Integrated vision is true, clear vision.

Saying the mantra sometimes seems a lost cause when we are tired or agitated. But the work of faith is never wasted. There are moments of clarity, haiku moments, even of seeing the risen Jesus, but the real fruit is the expanding experience of love which is what the vision means. No one says there is only one way.

But the way is one/ It must be one/ The beauty of the mantra/ is that it is one.

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