

“The Oceans of God” An Excerpt from The Present Christ

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by John Main OSB

(New York: Crossroad, 1991), pp. 111-112, 116-117.

Our life is a unity because it is centered in the mystery of God. But to know its unity we have to see beyond ourselves and with a perspective greater than we generally see with, when self-interest is our dominant concern. Only when we have begun to turn from self-interest and self-consciousness does this larger perspective begin to open.

Another way of saying that our vision expands is to say that we come to see beyond mere appearances, into the depth and significance of things. . .not just. . .in relation to ourselves but. . .to the whole of which we are part. This is the way of true self-knowledge and it is why true self knowledge is identical with true humility. [. . .]

By stillness in the spirit we move into the ocean of God. If we have the courage to push off from the shore we cannot fail to find direction and energy. The further out we travel the stronger the current becomes, and the deeper our faith. For a while the depth of our faith is challenged by the paradox that the horizon of our destination is always receding. *Where are we going with this deeper faith?* Then, gradually we recognize the meaning of the current that guides us, and we see that the ocean is infinite.

After meditation: an excerpt from “The Far Field” by Theodore Roethke in *THE COLLECTED POEMS OF THEODORE ROETHKE* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), p. 201.

All finite things reveal infinitude:

The mountain with its singular bright shade

Like the blue shine on freshly frozen snow,

The after-light upon ice-burdened pines;

Odor of basswood on a mountain-slope,

A scent beloved of bees;

Silence of water above a sunken tree:

The pure serene of memory in one man—

A ripple widening from a single stone

Winding around the waters of the world.