

The Real Thing

 wccm.org/weekly-readings/the-real-thing

9 April 2022

At Bonnevaux we have a number of springs. One I always feel especially present to is at the end of the valley, beyond what we call the Easter Tree. It bubbles up through a tiny aperture in the ground; it is visible only as a minor disturbance, bringing small particles of earth with it as it breaks into the visible world. It is continuous and it is the source of a flowing stream. An ancient presence resides there with residual signs of human construction around it because it must have attracted people there, as wisdom itself does, beyond memory.

Religions where the spring of wisdom has been blocked become mere structures of dogma and ritual, competing with each other or secretly thinking of each other as enemies. Jesus spoke prophetically—and paid a high price for doing so—against such religion. [. . .] Wherever there is a living stream of wisdom Christ is active. It enters our world of time and space especially through the example and deep silent, passion of people of faith and good will. These are the true teachers of wisdom, most of them hidden. They do not look for acclaim, for security or status or even for certainty. They live the secret of servant-leadership which is the only way to exercise power in a way that does no evil.

After meditation: “Soul and The Old Woman” by Rumi in *THE SOUL OF RUMI*, tr. by Coleman Barks (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002), p. 56.

SOUL AND THE OLD WOMAN

What is the soul? Consciousness. The more awareness, the deeper the soul. And when

such essence overflows, you feel a sacredness around. It's so simple to tell one who

puts on a robe and pretends to be a dervish from the real thing. We know the taste

of pure water. Words can sound like a poem but not have any juice, no flavor to

relish. How long do you look at pictures on a bathhouse wall? Soul is what draws

you away from those pictures to talk with the old woman who sits outside by the door

in the sun. She's half blind, but she has what soul loves
to flow into. She's kind; she weeps.

She makes quick personal decisions, and laughs so easily.

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