

The divine harmony

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An excerpt from Laurence Freeman OSB, “Spirit,” JESUS THE TEACHER WITHIN (New York: Continuum, 2000), pp. 187.

In St John’s gospel, the Resurrection and the sending of the Spirit are seen as a single event. On the evening of Easter Day Jesus came and stood among the disciples while they were huddled fearfully in a locked room. His first word to them was shalom. The rich Hebrew word for peace invoked the blessing of the harmony of all orders of being. Shalom flows directly from the Divine harmony which is the Spirit. To receive it is to share in that peace beyond all understanding. Jesus then breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.’

His breath, which carried his words into their minds and listening hearts, is a medium of the Spirit. Then he gave them the power to forgive sins. This power to forgive. . . is a charism of the Spirit because forgiveness removes the greatest of all obstacles to communication. It heals wounds, confesses the truth that sets us free, consoles pain, calms anger, dissolves resentment, achieves the reconciliation of enemies. Whoever knows the truth has the power to forgive. . .

We learn through her effect on ourselves what the Spirit is: a friend who has no favorites and who liberates the power to love, to forgive endlessly. She is beyond observation but we recognize her by the traces of her silent, guiding, healing, consoling passage through our lives.

After meditation: Naomi Shihab Nye, Famous in WORDS UNDER THE WORDS: Selected Poems (Portland: Far Cover, 1995), cited in Poets. Org.

Famous

The river is famous to the fish.

The loud voice is famous to silence,
which knew it would inherit the earth
before anybody said so.

The cat sleeping on the fence is famous to the birds
watching him from the birdhouse.

The tear is famous, briefly, to the cheek.

The idea you carry close to your bosom
is famous to your bosom.

The boot is famous to the earth,
more famous than the dress shoe,
which is famous only to floors.

The bent photograph is famous to the one who carries it
and not at all famous to the one who is pictured.

I want to be famous to shuffling men
who smile while crossing streets,
sticky children in grocery lines,
famous as the one who smiled back.

I want to be famous in the way a pulley is famous,
or a buttonhole, not because it did anything spectacular,
but because it never forgot what it could do.

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