

Committing to faith



An excerpt from John Main OSB, Letter Four, LETTERS FROM THE HEART (New York: Crossroad, 1988), pp. 63-64.

[The] commitment of faith is not merely intellectual or dialectical. It is not that we decide to believe in the ideas of the Christian tradition. It is much rather that we have the courage and, in a real sense, the recklessness to open ourselves to the unknown, the unfathomable and truly mysterious. . . . We allow ourselves, in the full biblical sense, to know the mystery or, even better, to be known *by* it. To allow ourselves to do this (a better way of putting it than to say *make* ourselves do it) is to follow the fundamental gospel precept of becoming simple, of becoming childlike, of becoming awake. It is no small cause for wonder that despite the fact that. . . it is so easily forgotten by those in [the tradition's mainstream, that these are the fundamental tenets of the gospel—faith is not a matter of exertion but of openness.

We need to see faith . . . as openness, and to see it as a positive, creative, sensitive way of being—miles apart from mere passivity or quietism. The effectiveness of all doing depends on the quality of being we enjoy. And to be open implies certain other qualities: such as being still, because we cannot be open to what is *here* if we are always running after what we think is *there*; such as being silent, because we cannot listen or receive unless we give our whole attention; such as being simple, because what we are being

open to is the wholeness, the integrity of God. This condition of openness as the blend of stillness, silence and simplicity is the condition of prayer: our nature and being in wholesome harmony with the being and nature of God. . .

Meditation is our way to this condition of being fully human, fully alive [the] condition we are all called to.

After meditation: thank You God for most this amazing day, E.E. Cummings, 100 SELECTED POEMS (New York: Grove Press, 1954), p. 114.

I thank You God for most this amazing
day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(I who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any lifted from the no
of all nothing human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

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