

Leaving behind our religious selves

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From John Main OSB, *The Christian Crisis*, THE PRESENT CHRIST (New York: Crossroad, 1991), pp. 74-76.

The call to the modern person, the call to all of us, is to become spiritual, and to become spiritual we have to learn to leave behind our official religious selves that is, to leave behind the Pharisee that lurks inside all of us because, as Jesus has told us, we have to leave behind our whole self. All images of ourselves coming as they do out of the fevered brain of the ego, have to be renounced and transcended if we are to become one with ourselves, with God, with our brethren that is, to become truly human, truly real, truly humble.

Our images of God must similarly fall away. We must not be idol-worshippers. Curiously, what we find is that they fall away as our images of self fall away, which suggests what we always guessed anyway, that our images of God were really images of ourselves. In this wonderful process of coming into the full light of Reality, of falling away from illusion, a great silence emerges from the center. We feel ourselves engulfed in the eternal silence of God. We are no longer talking to God or worse, talking to ourselves. We are learning to be "to be with God, to be in God. [. . .]

After meditation: an excerpt from Richard Rohr, Pointing in the Same Direction, Tuesday, September 15, 2015, Richard Rohr Daily Meditations from The Center for Action and Contemplation, www.cac.org.

The great mystics tend to recognize that . . . God . . . does not need our protection or perfect understanding. All of our words, dogmas, and rituals are like children playing in a sandbox before Infinite Mystery and Wonderment. If anything is true, then it has always been true; and people who sincerely search will touch upon the same truth in every age and culture, while using different language, symbols, and rituals to point us in the same direction. The direction is always toward more love and union—and in ever widening circles.

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