

A LENTEN REFLECTION

We are placed on earth so that we may learn to bear the beams of love (Blake). Whose love? Love who enables us to love one another, to care for our Common Home and to be the thinking part of the universe. But as Rainer Maria Rilke has said:

*For one human being to love another
is perhaps the most difficult task of all, the epitome, the ultimate test.
It is that striving for which all other striving is merely preparation.*

To love is difficult, yes. But impossible, no – because Love out of whose stuff we are made of shows us how -- entices us, lures us, to love and give ourselves away to the other. Jesus did it himself, loving all those around him with the same love existing between him and his *Abba*. Radical love brought Jesus to the edges of suffering, pain and torture – crucified into the abyss of abandonment and death. Three days after, He rose again because Love makes sure that death is not the last word. Life is! Love! Light! The Resurrection filled all creation with the Christ's cosmic Presence. Love is the force, the energy that propels us to a future that is filled with hope, because God not only sustains us now but is also our Future.

Meanwhile, we struggle every day to get there. In the struggle, we find out that one of Life's most important centers is Prayer. Prayer is space-time that we consciously dwell in to be alone with Someone or Something who, from within our very depths, invites us into a *relationship*. We are led to a totally other depth-dimension of reality which, if we steadfastly and seriously give ourselves to, makes us aware more and more that we are loved, we are okay, we are strong, we belong. We will never be undone; in fact, we are made more complete, part of a whole. Gradually we understand that chaos, suffering and death are part and parcel of Life – they claim us, even as beauty and harmony, peace and joy also do.

We moreover notice that, aware as we are of goodness within, of being loved and loving, we too can be mean and miserable. The evil that stalks the world is also within us. Is this when we throw in the towel? No. That's when day in and day out, we accept who we are: sinners who are loved and forgiven but who need help to truly love. The first lesson we are taught is to be merciful, first to our humbled selves and then, the second is like the first: to bring this mercy to others who like us are also loved and forgiven; like us also given the rain and the sun and all Life's gifts *gratis, free of charge*.

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)

Prayer is that place where we are seen and loved just as we are ... and it is in that acceptance, in that Yes, that we are changed -- and our lives are turned around, within and without, towards Love, towards Light, to Life unending. Prayer needs practice, lots of it, and is Lent not a good time to pray? Indeed it is always time to *become prayer* and come to new levels of Consciousness – learning to bear the beams of love.

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