Reflections on Isolation: Rob (Fi Jenvey, narrator, on YouTube)

This reflection and meditation can be done without the Youtube video (recommend the use of Youtube if you can). For those who struggle with hearing, the text below can also be used to support the video. Our Youtube presentation is an invitation to spiritually join regular meditators at Wisdom Centre (presently isolated and meditating in their own homes). The tradition we meditate in is Centering Prayer which is fully inclusive of all traditions of Christian Meditation and welcoming of World Traditions

the text is on the screen with narration. Music and a count down timer are part of the presentation. For technical reasons, the reflection has some disruption to the sound quality. To overcome this, a transcript is below.

Begins with usual opening prayers and introductions (Audio Visual or follow using text below)

Welcome to Christian Meditation in the Centering Prayer Tradition with Fi Jenvey (narrator).

Opening Prayer: Through Jesus Christ, by the Spirit, by whose breath our souls are raised to life. We, in meditation in this time of crisis pray with all others, as one community and one world to One God, we unite with our brothers and sisters of all world traditions

With God are Wisdom and understanding. May our ears be attentive, may the meditation of our hearts be for understanding. Through Christ, may we seek and find you, acting only according to Your will. May we follow His teaching, also seeking, the wisdom of the Holy Fathers and Mothers. May we commit to love of earth, faithfulness, community, stability, peace and justice making.

Letting go of all else, in contemplation we surrender in love to you. Let our sacred word be a symbol of our consent to your loving presence and healing. May we be faithful to this word so that it rises in our hearts, awakening that sense of Your presence. **Amen**

A Reflection from Rob: *Isolation has been imposed on us. Recently some emphasis has been made on the physical, and not social nature of the isolation. This is important because it is crucial that we remain in touch with one another. However, there has been a massive withdrawal from all our many activities, and we are having to spend our time with fewer people and often on our own.*

Reading from Bede Griffiths Letters

Thoughts on this reading from Rob: For Rob, Fr. Bede Griffiths believes our meditation should lead into silence, into the world of 'non-duality.' Griffiths speaks of the resolution of differences and conflicts. Our period of isolation could be seen as an opportunity to develop that practice.

As Griffiths says: "It seems to me that we have ultimately to go beyond all forms of thought – even beyond the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Church etc. All these belong to the world of 'signs' – manifestations of God in human thought – but God himself, truth itself, is beyond all forms of thought. All meditation should lead into silence, into the world of 'non-duality', when all the differences – and conflicts – in this world are transcended – not that they are simply annulled, but that they are taken up into a deeper unity of being in which all conflicts are resolved – rather like colours being absorbed into pure white light, which contains all the colours but resolves their differences."

Reading from Martin Laird, An Ocean of Light – Luminous Mind

Rob shares his thoughts on this reading: For Rob, Laird encourages the practice of allowing the mind to 'declutter', leading to the flowering of awareness with resolution in silence. Perhaps we can allow this period to be one in which we live, as he says "in quiet contentment with our circumstances as they happen to be, not the way we hope (deceptively) the practice of contemplation will shape them to be."

As Laird says: "Simplicity of God is too intimately present for the thinking mind, whether reactive or receptive, the fathom. Nothing has bee acquired or added to receptive mind so that we now have something new, which we call luminous mind. The luminous mind is and has ever been the very ground of all, whether reactive mind or receptive mind, an expansive field of bright and boundless clarity that can break through the most cluttered of minds, without any effort on our part.

Imagine a room so heaped with clutter – old magazines, newspapers, invoices, notices of foreclosure, unopened and unposted birthday cards, unfiled tax returns, clothing that no longer fits – that we cannot even see the floor. Mental clutter provides us something to cling to. The practice of contemplation initiates the process of decluttering the mind by means of inner silencing. We ourselves do that make any of this happen. The process is typically painful, especially when it involves the decluttering (purification or liberation) of what used to be called "our higher nature": pride, envy, greed, vainglory, concern with what others think of us – our reputation. These are more painful because they are more spiritual. The best first response is simply to meet them as Mt. Zion meets the changing patterns of weather – with calm acceptance, gentle indifference, and without commentary. Decluttering will continue to the extent that we do not try to make it happen but instead simply stay out of the way by dedication to our practice and learning how to live gently and silently out of that practice.

Over many seasons of practice, layers of clutter are removed by the liberating dynamism of stillness itself. What is revealed is a vast dimensionless floor space cleared of clutter, a space that we have perhaps never before seen. This clear floor space is and has always been the radiant ground of all: luminous mind, full and flowering, always present, pure, and simple.

In his Letter to the Romans, St. Paul says, "do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:2). Seen in the light of the practice of contemplation, renewal of the mind is the manifestation of luminous mind, an ocean of light. When luminous mind swells with such ripeness that it breaks open, there emerges from it the

very flower of awareness itself. The flower of awareness "perceives" only the grounding union of all creation in such a way that the particularity of every form of life – all creation- is distinct to the extent that we are all one in the breathing depths of God. Only inner silence resolves these riddles. Their resolution is silence. Cupped in the petals of the flower of awareness is emptiness, in which we live in freedom in the midst of our life circumstances, be they delightful, dull, laden with the burden of getting through the day – in quiet contentment with our circumstances as they happen to be, not the way we hope (deceptively) the practice of contemplation will shape them to be.

Reading From John Cassian, Conferences x.6

Rob shares his thoughts on this reading: For Rob, In this beautiful but perhaps challenging passage from John Cassian, he speaks of retreating into the "high mountain of solitude", liberation from the world and entering into experience of the divine with "the clarified eye of the spirit". This, I feel, is a perfect passage to lead one into our meditation which we could do individually but spiritually together.

Cassian Says: "To gaze with utterly purified eyes on the divinity is possible – but only to those who rise above lowly and earthly works and thoughts and who retreat with Him into the high mountain of solitude. When they are freed from the tumult of worldly ideas and passions when they are liberated from the confused melée of all the vices, when they have reached the sublime heights of utterly pure faith and pre-eminent virtue, the divinity makes known to them the glory of Christ's face and reveals the sight of its splendours to those worthy to look upon it with the clarified eye of the Spirit."

In the Christian Tradition, we pray (oratio), read (lectio), meditate (meditatio), and as the Spirit works in us, we continue in contemplation (contemplatio). These four steps are known as Lectio Divina.

Bell Sounds…

20-minute meditations begins…Count down timer starts

Bell Sounds…Meditation ends

Ends with usual closing prayers: Through Jesus Christ, by the Spirit, by whose breath our souls are raised to life, we in meditation in this time of crisis pray with all others, as one community and one world to One God, we unite with our brothers and sisters around the world. Moments of your personal prayer follow**…Amen**

Thank you for meditating with us, please join us again soon

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