

A SPIRITUALITY OF COMMUNION

"fostering a climate where communion takes place"

Elizabeth O'Connor

Let there be spaces in your togetherness

Kahlil Gibran

The word salvation (like the name Jesus) is derived from a Hebrew root that denotes "to be spacious". A fully authentic, free human life needs spaciousness, or room to breathe. We need room to be ourselves. We know what it is to be pressed, crowded or overwhelmed, what it's like to face deadlines, expectations, demands. These pressures originate from outside us as well as from within us.

We owe it to ourselves to find such room, or space. Think about where you get such space, and how you find it. If your day seems crowded or overwhelming, explore why this happens. Why do you keep putting off "making time"? Or think you can't make time? Are you afraid you might not find anything there, or not like what you find?

In Jesus, God makes space for us. God "makes room" by constricting divinity. Jesus "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, and [so] **emptied himself...**".

This suggests a movement from willfulness to willingness, from making something happen to allowing things to happen. This is "letting go and letting God". What is called out from you in this (possibly) new attitude towards life? Courage? Trust? Patience?

Kierkegaard said that the character of Christianity is communion. Many Christians, not least Anglicans, have grown up with the term "Communion" for the Eucharist. It is a very beautiful word. And whether we call it the Mass or the Lord's Supper, we all receive Holy Communion

Transcendence is a deeply and joyously experienced need to be in harmony even with what we ourselves are not, with what we do not understand, with what seems distant from us in time and space, but with which we are mysteriously linked because, together with us, all this constitutes a single world; transcendence as the only real alternative to extinction.

Vaclav Havel

Love- or self-transcendence- is the key to the life of Jesus, and the very truth of our existence. Love, or making room for the "other", reverencing and respecting the "other", seeing the "other" as God sees them: this is our calling, and this is, in truth, who we really are. We flourish when we give ourselves away. We are not isolated, autonomous individuals: we are, and we find ourselves, in and through each other. We often experience the other as an obstacle, when in fact, if we could see clearly, the "other" is both gift and invitation into a fuller, richer, life.

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