

A SPIRITUALITY OF COMMUNION

the gift of otherness

The way forward is the way to someone else. John Taylor

I cannot be me without you
and we cannot be us without them
and together we have a future

In our African language we say, "A person is a person through other persons". I would not know how to be a human being at all except I learned this from other human beings... We are made for a delicate network of relationships, of interdependence. We are meant to complement each other. Desmond Tutu

Think about significant relationships with parents, partners, children, friends. Paulo Freiere says "we work out our salvation in communion". How true is this in your experience?

Think about the "otherness" of others - their strangeness, your inability to fully understand them. Can you begin to see how they can gift you – in the frustrations, invitations, challenges they bring you?

The human person deserves to be preserved; human society deserves to be renewed.
Vatican II

Love is the extremely difficult realization that something other than ourself is real.
Iris Murdoch

Every "other" is a new face of the hidden God.
Margaret Magdalen CSMV

Spend some time reflecting on what really annoys or irritates you about some people. What kind of person makes you angry? Who are you highly critical of?

As you reflect - it may be you can see links or themes. Instead of projecting on to others - see how they are showing you something about yourself. This may expose a vulnerable place in you - a place where you are tempted into believing false messages about yourself (eg I'm not good enough, I'm not very religious, I'm pathetic, etc).

Of course, the ultimate model for the ecclesiastical *communio* is the Trinitarian *communion* of Father, Son and Holy Spirit- of Maker, Lover and Keeper- the community or unity of God in diversity and plurality.

It is in deep solitude that I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my brothers and sisters. The more solitary I am, the more affection I have for them. It is pure affection, and filled with resonance for the solitude of others.

Thomas Merton

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