

FAITH

A question of doubt

The opposite of faith is not doubt, but the closed mind.

True faith can only grow and mature if it includes the elements of paradox and creative doubt. Such doubt is not the enemy of faith but an essential element of it. For faith in God does not bring the false peace of answered questions and resolved paradoxes.

Kenneth Leech

The questioning involved here is not our interrogation of the data, but its interrogation of us. It is the intractable strangeness of the ground of belief that must be constantly allowed to challenge the fixed assumptions of religiosity.

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To come to the point where you disbelieve passionately in a certain kind of God may be the most important step you can take at the direction of the true God.

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The challenge of atheism [Olivier Clement talks of "purification by atheism"] in its various guises is one that has the potential to deepen what is said about our commitments.

Rowan Williams

Going "beyond what is certain, to listen to what is not yet clear". Is this an exciting, challenging way to live? What holds you back? What fears or anxieties do you experience? Harry Williams says doubt is "a friend with whom we need to live"; What difference would it make to befriend your doubts, to let them befriend you?

Are there things you once held dear, and have now abandoned? Are you better for it? Faith allows us to face the illusions and the rationalizations we too often live by, and it holds together the contradictions of life, and makes tensions bearable. As someone has put it: "the asking of questions [is] a more penetrating thing than the giving of answers". We thrive on questions as we are so constituted that we need problems more than solutions". (J. V. Taylor) Be open to your real questions. Listen to them. What does it feel like to admit to them, knowing there are no easy answers?

I realize that my faith and unbelief are never far from each other. Maybe it is exactly at the place where they touch each other that the growing edge of my life is.

Henri Nouwen

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