

Learning Jesus

A Lenten reflection: Week 5

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring goodness to the poor.

Luke 4:18

The befriending Spirit of God - in a spirit of solidarity - declares our true vocation. We flourish by giving ourselves away. Self transcendence - for the sake of the other - is where we find ourselves. Jesus is the very truth of our existence. He shows us who we really are.

Blessed are you who are poor, for the reign of God is yours.

Luke 6:20

We are in the right place when we are poor. Poverty is truly the "hidden component of every transcending act". We have nothing to brag about before God. We do not belong to ourselves. We are dependent creatures: everything is gift. Our treasure, our coming to ourselves, springs from the mystery of God.

Repent, for the reign of God is at hand.

Matthew 4:17

A change of heart, an about turn, a new way of looking at things: this is repentance. And it opens us up to the attractive, imaginative, alternative reality of the Kingdom. Repentance is genuinely prophetic: like the prophet, we see with the eyes of God.

I am the way, and the truth, and the life

John 14:6

What Jesus offers is a way of being in the world that is real and authentic, and one which is genuinely life-giving and freeing. The only absolute is the absoluteness of unconditional love. So Jesus is not offering us a creedal statement or a proposition - but a way of being that is utterly truth-full and which waits to be learned, practised and lived. Talk about it, and we are tempted to make exclusive claims: live it, and we discover his grace-full and inclusive way of life.

Be compassionate just as God is compassionate.

Luke 6:36

This is not a task or a duty. It is a discovery of not only who we are, but **whose** we are. It is nothing less than living the intimacy and mystery of God, in whose image we are made. It is learning to live without anxiety, and without competition. Compassion is our proper identity. It is the heart of the new community of God, the new way of being-in-relation.

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