

LOVE IS HIS MEANING

Thomas Merton, after 20 years as a Trappist monk made a profound observation: "My monastery...is a place in which I disappear from the world as an object of interest in order to be everywhere in it by hiddenness and compassion".

Only love makes sense of such a vocation, and yet it is a vocation in which all of us can share. Disappearing as an object of interest suggests I am not, nor need be, centre-stage. Being everywhere in hiddenness and compassion shifts the centre of gravity from self to grace. At the heart of this life is **freedom**: freedom from compulsions, attachments, addictions. And the fruit of such life is nothing less than **community**.

Julian of Norwich, at the end of her Revelation of Divine Love, looks back and asks the meaning of her revelations. She realized that God revealed what he did to her "because he wants to have it better known than it is".

Know it well, love was his meaning. Who reveals it to you? Love. What did he reveal to you? Love. Why does he reveal it to you? For love.

...So I was taught that love is our Lord's meaning. And I saw very certainly in this and in this love he has done all his works, and in this love he has made all things profitable to us, and in this love our life is everlasting.

Julian of Norwich

Primordial words always remain like the brightly lit house which one must leave behind, "even when it is night". They are always as though filled with the soft music of infinity. No matter what it is they speak of, they always whisper something about everything. If one tries to pace out their boundary, one almost becomes lost in the infinite. They are the children of God, who possess something of the luminous darkness of their Father.

Karl Rahner

Love is a primordial word - striking mysteriously and deeply into the human heart, offering us an horizon which is far reaching and extending, always speaking to us of "more" or "beyond," a word that is never exhausted. Live with the word: let it inform your every moment: let it sink from your head into your heart.

Perhaps you are worried at present, experiencing loss and grief, or illness: as you get in touch with your reality let love become its meaning. Don't try and analyse it or work it out: simply rest in the knowledge that love is speaking directly into your condition.

In all the circumstances of your life love is addressing you, wanting you to stay with it in such a way that you discover a deeper meaning, a more fulfilling challenge, a more profound realization of who you can be and become.

Philip Carter is a retired Anglican Priest. He was the inaugural president of the Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction (AECSD). He ran the Julian Centre in Adelaide, an independent and ecumenical centre for spirituality, from 1997-2009.

Contact: juliancentre@gmail.com