

# Self-giving and unconditional love is the only absolute

*Transcendence is the only real alternative to extinction*

Vaclav Havel

Self-transcendence is the movement from within to beyond ourselves. It is reaching out - towards the other, to all living things. It is the deeply felt and joyous need to be in harmony with what we ourselves are not....because it is the expression and affirmation of the deep inter-connectedness, the “hidden wholeness” we have with each other.

*The way forward is the way to someone else.*

John V. Taylor

Jesus is the self-communication of God to the universe, and at the same time the self-transcendence of the universe to God (Karl Rahner). Jesus is both God’s unconditional love for all creation and creation’s unconditional response to that love. In Jesus we hear God’s YES to humanity and all of creation, and creation’s humanity’s YES to God. In Jesus we see both gift and response. He is our future who has already appeared. As you think about these things, can you join you “yes” to Jesus’ YES?

*God desires us, as if we were God, as if we were that unconditional response to God’s giving that God’s self makes in the life of the Trinity.*

Rowan Williams

The Christian vision isn’t an optional extra, a particular way of being religious. It is offering us a universal way of being human. Jesus- the one true human being - shows us that we are Christologically and paschally structured. We flourish when we give ourselves away. How attractive is that? Think about the little opportunities offered to you every day to create a space for another, to let go of your opinions and ideas, your need to fight back, to be defensive or to stay as the victim- and discover genuine and authentic community.

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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](mailto:juliancentre@gmail.com)

Jesus - who shows us something of how God looks at us - says to us that we matter, that we are good at heart, that we have an inherent and inalienable dignity. But there is a double dimension to this - for with this sense of value, dignity and inner beauty comes "the wound of self-knowledge". But Jesus is the one who "comes to wound us and to heal the wound". In him we see ourselves as we truly are.

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*From the time these things were first revealed I had often wanted to know what was our Lord's meaning. It was more than fifteen years after that I was answered in my spirit's understanding. 'You would know our Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well. Love was his meaning. Who showed it you? Love. What did he show you? Love. Why did he show it? For love. Hold on to this and you will now and understand love more and more. But you will not know or learn anything else- ever!*

*So it was that I learned that love was our Lord's meaning. And I saw for certain, both here and elsewhere, that before ever he made us, God loved us; and that his love has never slackened, nor ever shall. In this love all his works have been done, and in this love he has made everything serve us; and in this love our life is everlasting. Our beginning was when we were made, but the love in which he made us never had beginning. In it we have our beginning.*

Julian of Norwich 86