

Encountering Mystery

She-Who -Is

Elizabeth Johnson

To “have room inside yourself....to have another actually living and moving and having being in yourself...is quintessentially a female experience” (cf Philippians 2:6-8- the self-emptying, or divine *kenosis* enacted in Jesus Christ). God restricts divine presence and power to make room for creation. Such “spaciousness”- the whole of creation finding space to be fully itself - is the very characteristic of salvation and freedom.

The Hebrew root of the word salvation is “spaciousness”: room to breathe, room to be ourselves, to discover that “I am”- St Augustine said that God’s first gift to us is to be able to say “I am”. Where do you find such space and spaciousness? It need not necessarily be always when you are alone. Think about how precious having some space “to be yourself” is. Is it perhaps time to take some positive steps so that your day/week have certain times set aside for such space?

**Does the image of your coming to birth, singing your own song,
living your “one wild and precious life” attract you and excite you?
And what gets in the way of your becoming “fully alive, fully human”?**

**Reflect on your own birth –
on your own “living and moving and having being” within your own mother.
Stay with this deeply mysterious, primal experience as you reflect on God –
the one who is immediately and intimately present to you –
as the ground of your being.**

God makes room for creation by contracting divine presence and power.

Elizabeth Johnson

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God clears a space for us “where the act of God and human reality are allowed to belong together without rivalry or fear, the place where Jesus is.

Rowan Williams

The absoluteness of the Gospel has to do with the absoluteness and the unconditional nature of love, which neither casts aside nor absorbs the other, but rather withdraws, makes room for the other and thus acknowledges his/her identity and enriches him/her. At stake is the truth in love.

Walter Kasper

“To be saved is to be so enlarged as to have space and spaciousness to fight lovingly with our enemies, that they may be embraced in friendship”. (Jim Cotter) Perhaps a good place to start is with yourself, with “the enemy within”, letting the stranger within become your friend. In this way I can begin to see “the other not as a rival or an obstacle in the way of my coming-to-be but is what makes the coming-to-be possible” (James Alison).

“Imagining what it’s like to be someone other than yourself is at the core of our humanity. It is the essence of our compassion and the beginning of morality.

Ian McEwan

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