

# ***Approaching Life***

***At cross-purposes - choosing to live in a way that leads to life***

*This is a difficult country, and our home*

Edwin Muir

*....forget*

*your self-defeating parables.*

*You alone have the choice*

*among earth's countless creatures*

*to live or die....*

Gwen Harwood

**The acceptance of oneself is the precondition of all human vitality.**

Romano Guardini

**Life has a way of testing what we really believe.**

Michael Morwood

We live in a divided world. We ourselves are divided. And these divisions rob us of life. Unlike trees - which Thomas Merton saw "have no problem" - because they are perfectly satisfied to be a tree. "With us it is different. God leaves us free to be whatever we like". Sin is about failing to grow up, refusing to be fully ourselves.

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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.

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**How real are you about life's challenges and questions?**

**Are you living in such a way that declares "life is worth living"?**

**As you look at your life, can you begin to see how important your orientation - your fundamental goal or purpose - is?**

**Can you pay attention to things that are valuable?**

**Do your choices reflect an habitual point of reference - or are they simply ad hoc and opportunistic?**

Learning to live with our egos differently - learning to make choices that arise out of our growing interior freedom from inordinate attachments, compulsions or addictions - becomes our life's work. We will engage with this work only if we have a big-enough purpose, one that fulfils and satisfies. The way forward Jesus offers us allows us to discover who we are (receiving our identity as pure gift - or as Jesus would say becoming as a little child) - and who we can become (through self-giving). Love is not only God's meaning: love is our meaning as well.

Do you hear Jesus *prescribing* (telling you what to do or think) or *describing* a way of thinking and acting that leads to life and freedom?

**Jesus of Nazareth asks us - in our life of relationships and love -**

**Who am I for you? Who are you for me?**

**Do you want to come toward me? And with me?**

**Do you want to live in step with my values, my goals, my truth?**

**Do you want to be "captured" by my vision of a life of self-giving love?**

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