

Pray as you can: not as you can't

Dom John Chapman

Hovering over the chaos

...behind and beneath the smooth wheels of the socially constructed world are two abiding facts: unreconciled pain and unexhausted compassion, the history of men and women and the history of God with us.

Rowan Williams

You need chaos in your soul to give birth to a dancing star.

Nietzsche

*In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth,
the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep,
while a wind from God swept over the face of the water.*

Genesis 1:1-2

To be salvific, the experience of chaos, that is the radical breakdown of the predictable, must be openly acknowledged; we cannot learn from the ordeal if we deny it is happening to us. That is what we mean by conversion in gospel life.

Gerald Arbuckle

This journey 'will always be accompanied by some measure of uncertainty, pain and confusion. Those negative feelings are the nudgings of God'.

Gerard Hughes

In a manner of speaking, the soul has a principle of chaos and a principle of order within it and its health depends upon giving each its due. Too much order and you die of suffocation; too much chaos and you die of dissipation.

Ronald Rolheiser

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Chaos challenges our need for order and control. Instead of fighting your inner chaos- out of fear- try and notice it, name it and befriend it as a source of creative energy. **As you identify the chaos in your life/world imagine Holy Spirit hovering over this chaos - promising life, order and purpose.**

Living systems, when confronted with change have the capacity to fall apart and reorganize themselves- adapting in response to what is called a 'strange attractor'. **We must be willing to move into the place of confusion and 'not knowing' - trusting in the Spirit's capacity to constantly renew all things.**

St. Augustine said that God is always wanting to give us good things, but our hands are too full to receive them. And our hands are too full because we cannot bear such emptiness. For deep within us there is a fearful anxiety - that we are not good enough, that we will be 'found wanting', that we have to 'make' something of ourselves. **If only we could see that our reality - our poverty and vulnerability and emptiness - is the place where God meets us. 'Pray as you can....' and in doing so meet the real God.**