

A 'THINKING HEART'

Etty Hillesum, a Jewish woman from Amsterdam, died in Auschwitz on 30th November, 1943. Throughout the descent into Nazism she kept an extraordinarily moving diary, addressing “that deeper and wider part (of myself) in which I repose....what I call God”. In the concentration camp women and girls would wail at night crying out loud, “We don’t want to think, we don’t want to feel, otherwise we are sure to go out of our minds”. In response, Etty’s prayer, which she wrote in her diary was simply: **“let me be the thinking heart of these barracks”**. Thomas Merton called Julian of Norwich **“a wise heart”**: and the marriage between head and heart, theology and spirituality, which she exemplified in her writings, we are re-discovering in our day.

The cost of creation

If God is love, and if the universe is His creation, then for the being of the universe God is totally expended in precarious endeavour, of which the issue, as triumph or as tragedy, has passed from his hands....God awaits upon the response of his creation. He waits as the artist or as the lover waits having given all...Always, for the richness of the creation, God is made poor: and for its fullness God is made empty.

W. H. Vanstone

Creation is precarious, vulnerable and patient activity. God gives freedom and even power to what God creates. God who is with us and for us is not elsewhere, but is endlessly and intimately engaged in the ‘extremity of endeavour’, finding yet new resources to restore and to redeem’.

‘Images are forms of transport. They move us on.’

(Anselm Gruen).

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**What images do you live with - what images of self, of life and of God?
Instead of thinking, 'Why did God let this happen?'
imagine a God who is at the heart of what has gone wrong
- receiving its appalling impact
and at the same time endlessly searching for ways to 'restore and redeem'.**