LEARNING JESUS: Part 4

*In this process, as I approach Jesus I begin to **appreciate** his truth, his way- not as immutable propositions to believe- but as a way of being in the world that leads to life, peace, joy, freedom, compassion and hope. The stories Jesus offers us are not propositional truths that we have to believe but dispositional truths that open us up to reality, and inviting us to live relationally and fully. As this way becomes increasingly attractive, I begin to realize that it is what I most deeply want.*

I am the door; whoever goes in through me will be saved; he will go in and out and find pasture.
John 10:9

Jesus is saying that we have lost our way. We do not know ourselves. We are not at home within ourselves. We have lost the ability to live. At best we are only half alive. Jesus wants us to experience again the rapture of being fully alive. He wants us to be without anxiety. He wants us to live interiorly free and outwardly fruitful. He wants us to go in and out secure enough in ourselves to give ourselves away.

...do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear.
Luke 12:22

Our experience of life is the arena for our experience of God, and calls us not to escape from life but to embrace it more fully. This is not magic, but very real, and we can say with Henri Nouwen, "I am resting while feeling restless, at peace while tempted, safe while still anxious, surrounded by a cloud of light while still in darkness, in love while still doubting. "

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.
Matthew 5:6

Relationships expose us to the best and worst in us; we fall below our best hopes: the world's pain numbs us or inspires us; we struggle between the poles of loneliness and solitude; and the ordinariness of our lives is a crucible in which we find life or death. And God's dream of another way is a sustained and sustaining vision that calls out from us the choices and commitments that will make for a better world.

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