



Grain

“All theological language is an approximation, offered tentatively in holy awe.” Father Richard Rohr

Field

12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. John 16:12-15

Thoughts

Where do you experience wonder? Many years ago, I searched for a spiritual path, outside of my Christian faith, open to what would pique my curiosity and nurture a sense of awe. It was surprising that what I was drawn to in other traditions kept leading me back to my own. The meditation practices in eastern religions were not far removed from silent prayer practiced by followers of Christ centuries ago, though without the same dimension of prayer to our God in the former. Many contemporary Catholics and more recently, Protestants, have even borrowed body postures and practices in breathing from eastern religions for centering prayer.

In a class I had on dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity my junior year in college, my professor told the story of a Christian wanting to learn to meditate from Zen Buddhists while he was living in Japan. The Zen priest at the particular temple he decided to try out not only taught meditation, but would give each practitioner a *koan*, which was a pithy, paradoxical question, statement, or story to meditate on. A *koan* is meant to help people break through their logic to another level of thinking; it's a sort of exercise in opening one up to epiphanies. The *koans* many of us have heard are “What is the sound of one hand clapping?” “What was your face before your mother was born?” How do you answer those questions logically? You don't.

Once at the temple, the Christian waited in anticipation for his *koan*. The Zen priest, knowing of the man's religion, surprised him with this: “What is the Trinity?”

Hearing the story, I realized I had always thought of the Trinity as well as many other Christian concepts and Biblical passages as ideas and precepts to figure out, which was fine, but I left out the dimension of wonder, something I looked for elsewhere but was part of my own tradition. What reversals and riddle-like statements did Jesus make that invite us into being in awe of God's love. In the case of the Trinity, the word is not in scripture but permeates the New Testament. What questions engage you? How is our action based in wonder? Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy