

Contemplative Outreach

Spiritual Journey with Thomas Keating

Part 4 Tape 21(a)



The Spiritual Senses

In the story of Mary and Martha entertaining Jesus at their house at Bethany, Mary exemplifies an attitude of listening attentiveness. She sits in rapt attention at the feet of Jesus oblivious of everything else except his words and his person.

Lectio Divina

In Lectio Divina we too can sometimes move beyond the actual words we are reading to the person of the eternal Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ disclosing himself to us in the text and offering us the Gospel narrative for conversation.

We can begin to lose track of images and reflections and the thoughts which were helpful become blurred as the process deepens and we begin to wait upon God, listening to his person and his presence and entering into union with him. We move beyond concepts, beyond feelings, beyond particular acts.

The Sacred Word

In Centering Prayer, the sacred word does not create God's presence or hold it in place. "It simply holds us in the attitude of waiting upon God in general loving attentiveness. Not to his words, not to concepts, but to the Presence itself."

The Cloud of Unknowing

"The 'cloud of unknowing' means we no longer during the time of prayer are knowing or trying to know God through concept, symbol, gesture, ritual. But we're trying to know him as he is in himself through pure faith, opening ourselves to his presence within us at the deepest level of our being, the source of our being, a presence that has always been there but is covered over by the layers of the false self system that hide from us this greatest reality of life."

Our movement into spiritual attentiveness can be triggered by nature, reading, service, scripture, liturgy, meditation, sharing, art and all kinds of prayer.

The Icon

Traditionally, an icon contains something of the mystery it depicts in the sacred image, so, the sacred glance or gaze is another trigger for spiritual attentiveness.

The Sacred Breath

Breath is *pneuma*, spirit, or, life force. The Fathers and Sisters of the desert spoke of the Holy Spirit as the sacred kiss between the Father and the Son, that "is not an aspiration for oneness as it is in human love, but is a sigh of infinite bliss and satisfaction because they possess each other."