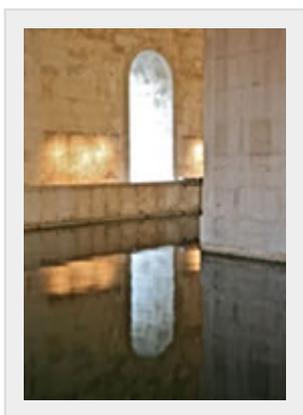


June 19 Readings



From Laurence Freeman, OSB, *Love That Divinizes*, **LIGHT**

WITHIN (New York: Crossroad), pp. 56-57.

We ask, "What is spirit?" and we find it less and less easy to answer. It would be easier to answer if one could make a clear opposition between those different aspects of our being, the aspects we encounter daily, in our relationships and in our reflection on the mystery of life, the dimensions of body, mind, and spirit. [. . .]

To ask, "What is the spirit?" is really asking "Who am I?" That is as simple a question as there is. And it is a question that can only be answered by knowing, "I am the person who is asking the question." When we encounter that level of powerful and purifying simplicity, the simplicity of pure being which we discover at the level of spirit, we also travel deeper into silence. Silence is where the final question has been left behind, where we are no longer trying to find answers to the reality beyond questions and answer.

At the point where we leave questions behind, where we ask unanswerable questions, like the [Zen] koan, we also discover a kind of absurdity, a kind of foolishness. It is the absurdity of trying to probe the mystery of spirit with the tools of the mind. I suppose an even more tragic kind of absurdity is the result of trying to grasp the spirit through the body as one might try through drugs. Our only response in the face of simplicity of that unanswerable kind is humility, and that is why the simplicity of our meditation gradually smashes our ego. . .if we will remain simple for long enough.

To remain simple is to journey in the spirit. The spirit is the utterly simple and basic identity of who we are, the irreducible person we are, the person God knows and loves. The spirit enfolds mind and body and every dimension of our life, bringing all its dimensions to fulfillment and their full potential, when we can allow the spirit free play. And that is the work of our meditation: learning to be. This is the work of the silence of our meditation in which we let our

consciousness travel naturally to its own starting point. .

Meditate for Thirty Minutes. Remember: Sit down. Sit still and upright. Close your eyes lightly. Sit relaxed but alert. Silently, interiorly, begin to say a single word. We recommend the prayer phrase "Maranatha." Recite it as four syllables of equal length. Listen to it as you say it, gently, but continuously. Do not think or imagine anything spiritual or otherwise. Thoughts and images will likely come, but let them pass. Just keep returning your attention ? with humility and simplicity to saying your word in faith, from the beginning to the end of your meditation.

After Meditation: From Abraham of Nathpar (6th century), THE SYRIAC FATHERS ON PRAYER AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE, ed. By Sebastian Brock (Kalamazoo: MI, 1987), p. 191.

Do not imagine, my beloved, that prayer consists solely of words, or that it can be learned by means of words. Listen to the truth of the matter from our Lord! Spiritual prayer is not learned and does not reach fullness as a result of learning, for it is not to a person that you are praying, before whom you can repeat a well-composed speech. It is to him who is Spirit that you are directing the movements of prayer. You should pray, therefore, in spirit, seeing that God is Spirit.

Weekly Readings Newsletter

Source URL: <http://www.wccm.org/content/june-19-readings>