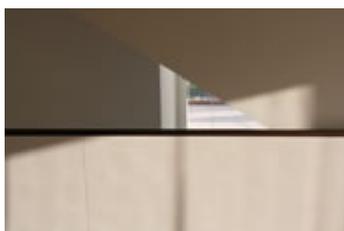


## Monday Lent, Week 4



**Even in deep sleep** we can have varying states of mind. In the dream state images and feelings can be generated that have powerful effects upon us emotionally and physically - as if the dreams were real. Unless we are very lucid we suffer the effects of the state of mind but cannot recognize it for what it is.

The same is true in the waking state when we suffer under an illusion or addiction whose harmful or untruthful nature we may even go so far as to deny. When, however, we do recognize and accept the state of mind for what it is we can say we have awakened or that we are in a state of greater mindfulness. The difference between the unawakened and the awakening state is so great that we may feel that that's it – there's not much further to go except to stay clearly conscious of what's happening to us.

Mindful awareness of this kind is certainly an improvement on being blindly driven by forces we cannot understand. But it will not lead us to the next, transformative stage where our consciousness actually evolves. For that we need, firstly, a personal commitment to go further – this is what we mean by faith. It is perseverance in relationship with what is not yet fully known to us but which we gradually realize is the source of all knowledge. We also need help beyond our own resources, grace, a force from beyond the horizon of our will.

Any sustained spiritual practice – such as the observance of Lent as a time of growing attention within and simplification externally – is about moving along this path of awakening. Mindfulness is a relief to get to and it brings many benefits. But the greater wonder is becoming aware of the bigger mind to which it leads, the mind of Christ that we are preparing during these days to understand better through the Easter mysteries.

Laurence Freeman OSB

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