The World Community for Christian Meditation

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READINGS FOR 17/6/2012

From Laurence Freeman OSB, ?Forgiveness and Compassion,?

ASPECTS OF LOVE (London: Arthur James, 1997), pp. 72-74.

. . . .Forgiveness [is] a process that takes us deep into our own wounded humanity, where we find our true self. Forgiveness can only be complete when it is as complete as the love of Jesus for his enemies; and that can only come about when we know ourselves as fully as he knew himself, and loved himself.

The same applies to the way we love humanity. Just as, in learning to love those closest to us, we withdraw our positive projections and fantasies, so in learning to love those who are our enemies we withdraw our negative projections. Finally, in learning to love everyone we have to withdraw our abstractions. We have to withdraw our statistical mind which is often the way we treat the suffering of others. . . . [But] learning to love humanity means being able to treat [any] member of humanity as a unique individual. [. . . .]

The only way to deal with the complexity of human relations is the simplicity of love. In love we do not judge, we do not compete; we accept, we revere, and we learn compassion. In learning to love others we release the inner joy of being that radiates outwards through us, touching others through our relationships. This is why communities, families, and marriages do not exist solely for the perfection of the people in those. . .relationships. They exist also to radiate love. . . .beyond themselves . . . .

It was John Main?s vision of human community, that community is made possible by the commitment we each make in solitude to the most profound relationship of our lives, which is our relationship with God. This is why in learning to love others we come to a new insight into the unity of creation and into the basic simplicity of life. We see what it means to say that love covers a multitude of sins. Forgiveness is the most revolutionary and transforming power of which we are capable. It teaches us that love is the essential dynamic of every relationship, the most intimate, the most antagonistic as well as the most casual. It?s the very ordinariness of our daily meditation that reveals to us how universal is the way of love.

After meditation: from Thomas Merton, THE WISDOM OF THE DESERT: SOME SAYINGS

OF THE DESERT FATHERS (Boston: Shambhala, 1994), pp. 66-67.

A brother in Scete happened to commit a fault, and the elders assembled, and sent for Abbot Moses to join them. He, however, did not want to come. The priest sent him a message, saying: Come, the community of the brethren is waiting for you. So he arose and started off. And taking with him a very old basket full of holes, he filled it with sand, and carried it behind him. The elders came out to meet him and said, What is this, Father? The elder replied: My sins are running out behind me, and I do not see them, and today I come to judge the sins of another! They, hearing this, said nothing to the brother but pardoned him.

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