

OUR SECRET

How is it possible that the image of a crucified person becomes the logo of a world religion? Followers of Jesus of Nazareth had the greatest difficulty convincing people who knew nothing about Him that this was a case of divine intervention. Ridiculous, say listeners, to this day. And still theologians break their teeth on it. It is an unruly confession and continues to demand explanation, especially when the story continues with the news of the resurrection of this crucified one. Who believes that with full conviction?

The only thing that really convinces is the closer acquaintance with this man in whom many recognized God incarnate. How did they come to this? It must have been the personality of Jesus that impressed many. What is characteristic of Him? No lie passed His lips. His commitment to people was movingly deep and broke through all the half-heartedness that characterizes man. He took the word truth rightly into His mouth, because His speaking was irrefutable. An incredible power emanated from Him to break through untruthfulness in such a way that it liberated. He unmasked people, made them authentic and whole again.

Whoever reads the gospel today encounters this authentic power again and again. Jesus' personality works like a storm in your muddling and searching, a thunderstorm. Forgiveness is his key word. Heal, restore what is wounded and tarnished. Complete love, not greedy grasping but merging into the other. Faithfulness. And always the reference to the Father. No boasting, but knowing that you can never be enough yourself and allowing that dependency.

How this person was able to penetrate history, how an earthly presence takes on timeless traits - we will never fully understand. The core seems to be a black hole, into which all knowledge and accomplishment is sucked. God is inscrutable, unmeasurable yet at the heart of Jesus' effective action that transcends time into eternity.

Prayer helps, at least if it is the disinterested abiding by that image of the crucified one. It begins to speak for itself as you contemplate it and try to discern its meaning for you. He captivates, attracts, appears as a mysterious energy because He loves and involves you in His complete love. A relationship with a crucified executive, what is it going to be?

Ambiguity will continue to accompany us because every relationship is full of secrets. Our knowing is piecemeal, we are mysteries to each other, and that ambiguity continues to occupy us. We look for something to hold on to, truthfulness and reliability. Those who, like Jesus, involve themselves with the Father, the divine secret, seem to lose themselves because you have to let go of everything if you adopt his pattern of relationship. It is almost disconcerting to realize that all of human business is embedded in this spiritual, inner life. No sharp boundaries, no incontrovertible proof, only suspecting, disclosing, every now and then.

What makes one happy? Today I know, tomorrow it is gone. I am a secret to myself, to the other beside me perhaps even more so. What gives me meaning? What does God do with me? Where then, how then? Perhaps God is enduring, not in that small human way but because He endures everything. He nurtures values that keep us alive and lift us beyond time and space.

So many words, and never the last. That is not reserved for us.

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