



A Life-Giving Mystery

Destiny Revealed: Decision Time

A meditation for Holy Week ● 19th March 2008 ● Rev Max

And he came out, and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. And when he came to the place he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, "Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, and he said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

Luke 22: 39-46

The Nature of Life

Life calls to every man, woman and child.
Life beckons.
Life calls us out.

It has always been so.

Life takes us by the hand,
it takes us into fresh fields.

Landscapes appear that have never been seen before.
The sights and sounds are strange
and yet entering into a situation
gives satisfaction and fulfilment.

It is necessary to enter in.

Something beckons you into unexplored lands,
and you do well to go.

You have the resources,
unimaginable resources.

Sustaining contact with who you are,
makes it possible to enter an unknown realm.

Remaining still,
and in the stillness feeling a sense of movement,
and feeling a sense of life flowing through you,
there are the needed resources.

There are little journeys,
trips to different places,
travels across time and space,
and meetings with many people.

A myriad of situations open up,
some small and some great,
each one prompting you to make a decision
and to act on it with determination.

Actions are taken and life is enhanced.
The spirit of a person is enlivened,
it is quickened,
the blood flows strongly and purely.

Life Reveals your Destiny

Each unfolding moment reveals the unique destiny of a person.
Each moment throws light on why you were born.

Each unpredictable meeting
shows up what challenges must be faced.

Life throws things onto the path.

Life does not ask:

What do you want to do today?

Life never asks:

Whom do you want to meet?

Life is not beholden to anybody.

Life is.

There is nothing to be gained from asking the question

What do I want out of life?

The truth is that life comes to you,
life addresses you,
life asks you the questions.

Life asks the question

*What are you going to do
in response to this particular living moment
the thing that is present right here and now?*

These are the things that I trust will absorb you
in this small meditation this evening.

I invite you to travel with me quietly.
We are about to pay a visit to several people
and see what they are doing.

Making a Visit to Three Places

Our First Visit

Let's make our first visit.

We are in a kitchen in a small family home.

A woman is there with her son.

She is standing beside the open door of a kitchen cupboard.

She holds a glass jar in her hand.

At the bottom of the jar there are a few coins.

She speaks sternly to her son.

*Have you taken money out of the jar?
Speak the truth now or it will be the worse for you!*

The young boy is silent,

his body tense,

his mind working hard.

He is determined to get himself out of this dangerous situation.

He silently says to himself

*I don't want to say that I took money out of the jar.
I don't want to say that I spent the money on fish and chips.
I really don't want to tell.
I won't tell.
Nothing could be worse than telling.*

His mother continues right on

*Come on now!
I know there was more money in the jar at breakfast time.
And no-one else has been in the kitchen!
Did you take the money?*

This is decision time.

And the little boy took a step into the unknown.

I took money out of the jar and bought fish and chips.

What a sense of relief swept through him.

And what a relief came into his mother.

Soon afterwards the relationship of these two was healed.

And not only that.

For both mother and son their experience enlarged,
a bigger idea of what could be created in life opened out.

And for the boy

a strengthening of his capacity to make decisions.

Our Second Visit

Our second visit is to a Roman amphitheatre.
It is the year 155 A.D.

Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna, is there.
He is 86 years old.

Throughout his long life he has made many decisions
and learned much about the power of decision.

He is being pressed by the Roman authorities
to acknowledge Caesar as a god.

*Now what harm is there in saying "Lord Caesar,"
and in offering incense, and so on,
and thus saving thyself?...
curse the Christ.*

Polycarp makes a very clear response.

*Eighty and six years have I served him,
and he hath done me no wrong;
how then can I blaspheme my king who saved me?*

Soon afterwards Polycarp is burned in a fire
and stabbed with a dagger.

Our Third Visit

Our third visit is to the Mount of Olives.

We are outside the city walls of Jerusalem.

There we see Jesus' disciples
and a little way off by himself
we see Jesus kneeling in prayer.

We become aware of the content of the prayer.

*Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me;
nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*

He is consumed with pain.
He continues in prayer.
He is in agony.
He sweats.

And his sweat is like great drops of blood
falling to the ground.

This is indeed decision time.

And the decision of all decisions is made.

Then knowing the consequence of his decision
he stops praying,
stands up,
and goes to his disciples.

An Unconquerable Life

Why are we alive today?

Why do we keep on going from day to day?

Is it that there is a spirit that speaks to you,
a spirit who reminds you of who you are?

Is it that there is a spirit

that makes you to see the real truth about yourself,
makes you to see that you are here on the earth
to live an unconquerable life?

Remember the meeting of Jesus with Nicodemus
presented to us by Saint John.

At the conclusion of the memorable interaction
there are these words:

*But he who does what is true comes to the light,
that it may be clearly seen
that his deeds have been wrought in God.*

What does Nicodemus do after this meeting with Jesus?

Some time later we find Nicodemus standing up to the authorities.

He points out that a person is not to be judged
without a hearing and a proper investigation.

We also see him at the burial of Jesus after his crucifixion.
He is bringing spices to put on his body.

We discover that Nicodemus is being true to his name,
a name that means to be the conqueror,
to be victorious.

Nicodemus is living out the words of the ancient song:

*O love that knoweth of no fear
O love that sheds a joyous tear
O love that makes me whole and free
Such love shall keep and hallow me.*

And there is another thing.

Please accept Nicodemus as someone who lives in the present.

Nicodemus is not only a figure of ancient history.
Nicodemus is intimately related to each one of us.

Nicodemus is *your* name.

And within *your* being there is an unconquerable spirit,
a source that gives you the power
to live an unconquerable life.

Each time you make a decision to act honourably
there is a release of energy.

Every act of love you make
is accompanied by a renewal of vitality.

On every occasion when you live with honour
or live with love
you are becoming unified within yourself,
you are becoming whole.

You experience a release of energy,
a renewal of vitality.

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