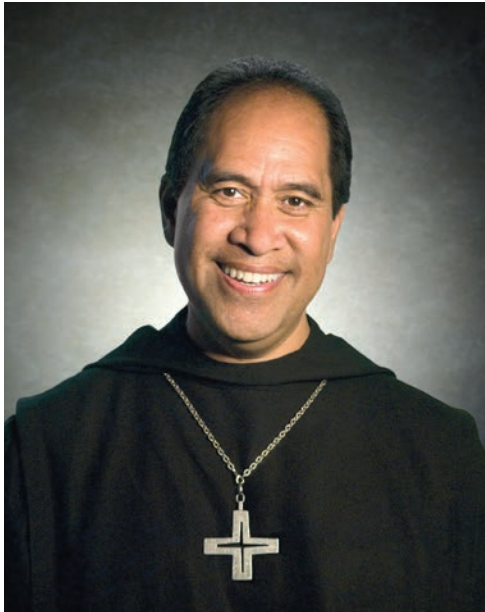


Nº 252 ✨ SPRING 2017

S T . A N D R E W ' S A B B E Y



THE VALYERMO
Chronicle



LETTER from the ABBOT

Mark and hundreds of others down the centuries teach us something we know but have to be reminded of over and over and over again: that our God doesn't give up on us, even after *we've* given up or quit. We might quit a hundred times, and we might deny Him a hundred times, but He is always there: waiting for our return, willing and ready to forgive if we but ask, like the prodigal son. Our God is a God of second chances. If we but have the humility to ask for another chance, to ask for forgiveness, to ask for mercy; He is ready to give it.

It's not necessarily the humility to say, "I'm wrong God, please forgive me,"... although it *is* that. But it is also the humility to recognize and admit that I don't deserve the goodness of God. It's like when Jesus performed the miracle of the great catch of fish for St. Peter. St. Peter realizing he was in the presence of a holy man, *fell to his knees* and said, "Lord, please leave me because I am a sinful man." *That* is truth, and *that* is humility. And Jesus responded to Peter, essentially saying, 'No, Peter. I will not leave you. Follow Me' (Luke 5).

That's the kind of humility that is required.... the humility that asks, "Lord, you want to use ME? "Yes", is always His answer.

Me, the one who quit? Yes.

Me, the one who denied you? Yes.

Me, the one who gossips? Yes.

Me, the one who backstabs? Yes.

Me, the one who uses and manipulates people? Yes.

Me, the one who struggles with addictions and depression and

discouragement and despair and pride and fears and insecurities and sins? Yes.

The Lord's answer is always 'yes' to our question, "who me?"

The Lord delights in using broken, imperfect, and sinful people like us because He wants to heal us, to give us life, to give us hope, to show us and others what He and His love can do in and through us, if we give Him a chance...so that we can see the effectiveness

of *His* power—and the ineffectiveness of our power. HE is the one who will transform us, not us. HE is the one who will cause the healing, the growth, and the holiness, not us... as long as we come to Him in all humility, because the Lord despises the proud.

So before we go seeking after the external signs mentioned in the gospel: power over evil, over illness, over poison—those signs that make people say, "oooh and ahhh and how cool"...let us first ask the Lord to clothe us with humility: a quiet, gentle but strong and fundamental virtue of the spiritual life, which allows God to use us in the way *He* desires.

St. Paul reminds us to seek the greater gift, which is love...because love is what will endure...and the cross, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the Eucharist.... are all signs of that love. We too are sent out into the world to be signs of that love....to be signs of the cross...to be signs of the love of our crucified and risen Lord in the world today. May He give us the courage and humility to do just that.

Abbot Damien ✧



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DEAR FRIENDS,

ST. MARK WAS A DISCIPLE OF ST. PETER the apostle, and companion/ co-laborer with St. Paul and St. Barnabas. But at one point while working alongside Paul and Barnabas, Mark deserted these companions of his. He simply quit. Nobody really knows exactly what happened, but Mark essentially packed his bags and left his brothers high and dry and returned to Jerusalem. In essence, he abandoned them.

This is a very pre-resurrection Peter-like thing to do. Like (spiritual) father, like son. And yet just like his spiritual father, Mark repented. He re-committed. He returned. He reconciled with St. Paul and picked up where he left off. He worked alongside St. Paul in the Lord's vineyard. This is the saint we celebrate: one who quit, one who abandoned his work *and* his companions in the Lord; but one who also repented and re-committed.

These great saints of old: Saints Peter, Paul,

SPIRITUALITY

— WHAT IS IT? WE HEAR OF BENEDICTINE spirituality, Carmelite spirituality, Franciscan spirituality. More often we hear: I'm spiritual, not religious. What does that mean? I think it is about not wanting an institution or even a tradition to tell me what to believe and how to live.

I think of a friend who lived on a sort of farm in Maine. The place had a pond with a snapping turtle. She would go and sit outside and watch the beauty — and keep a safe distance from the turtle. To her the world of beauty was sacred. And I would certainly call her spiritual. To see the beauty of the world, the beauty of nature, to give oneself time to be open to all this — surely that is spiritual.

Unfortunately snapping turtles are part of this. If a duckling crosses the pond, good-bye. And so being spiritual requires one to let in the awareness of pain and suffering too. It is not just that nature is “red in tooth and claw”: humans are far more so.

I have been reading a biography of Count Hellmuth von Moltke, having known previously only his connection with movements against Hitler. The book shows instead a widespread deep-seated disgust at all the immoral behavior of the regime — brutal war conduct, misuse of civilians, much else beside atrocities — and the readiness of large groups of people to build up and repair a very different nation. They did not whine or weep: they made detailed plans for decisive action. Interestingly, many of these people moved from disinterest in religion to a much more Christian stance. And this moved through northern Europe.

The dignity, integrity and courage of these people seems to me a sign of a strong spirituality — firm in its principles, clear in its outlook. That is to say: being spiritual is not about enjoying soft mood music and breathing incense. It is made of sterner stuff. What it is really about, if we use Christian vocabulary, is openness to the Spirit Who hovered over the primeval waters, who — like the wind that blows where it pleases and cannot be predicted or controlled. So, says

Jesus, is everyone born of the Spirit. And, as was the case in Hitler's Germany, this might require the courage to stand up and be counted — even at the risk of one's life.

One could also think of Teresa of Avila who continued writing and functioning even at the risk of the Inquisition. And conversely of her twentieth century younger sister, Elizabeth of the Trinity, drawn more and more deeply into silence. Or Charles de Foucauld going into the desert, brotherhood, martyrdom. Or Mother Teresa. It's a whole kaleidoscope showing how individual each one is. Is the Indian holy man drawn to a forest, surrounded by tame wild beasts not led by the Spirit? Or Gandhi? Or a poet like Rumi?

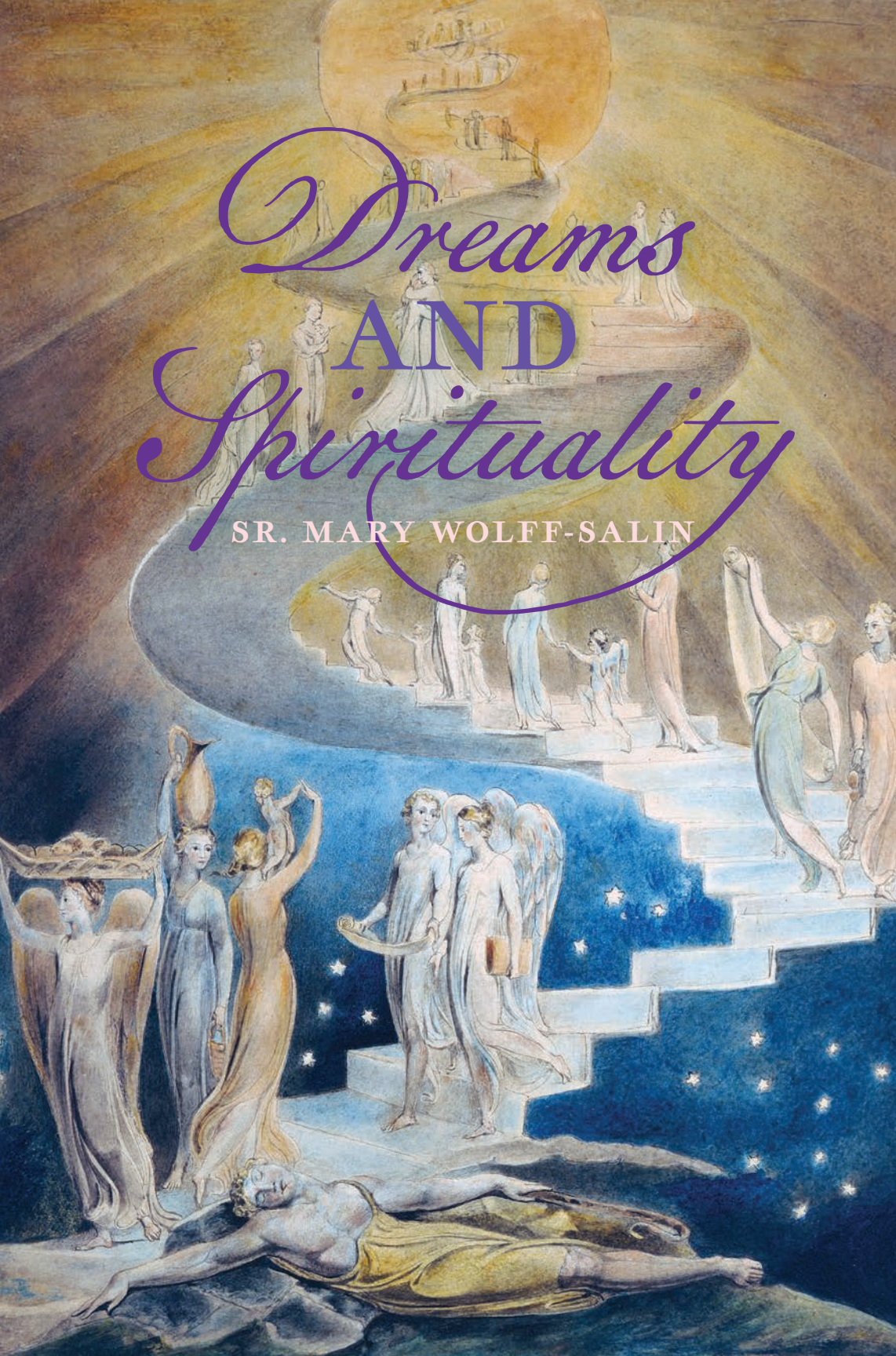
So being spiritual is not an easy way. There are costs.

And so, how does all of this connect with dreams? Very deeply. If we are open to the Spirit we will be open to what we are told in dreams.

Children of the Enlightenment that we are, we do not realize that for previous centuries the world was not limited to what we can see and touch. The world of nature in all its beauty — and terror — was like a sacrament, revealing realities far beyond it. The sun, without which life cannot go on, revealed the Son. Water, equally essential, could be grace. All of reality was like a book pointing far beyond itself to a yet more real reality. Early Christians read this one way; Platonists another, but it all pointed in a similar direction, relativizing the seen in favor of a broader dimension. Many in our day grope toward a wider world-view — hence the interest, for example, in shamanism. But a shaman has a different world-view from a twenty-first century American and one that I suspect no amount of weekend workshops could replace. How do we attain such a wider view?

Perhaps it is the poets who give us a glimpse. In the words of Francis Thompson:

O world invisible, we view thee,
O world intangible, we touch thee,
O world unknowable, we know thee,
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee...



Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars!-
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors...

The angels keep their ancient places;-
Turn but a stone and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces,
That miss the many-splendored thing.

Our estranged faces. There lies the problem. How do we develop faces with eyes that see and ears that hear? Augustine searched for a long time to understand. We know how he formulated his breakthrough understanding: "Late have I loved Thee. O beauty ancient and ever new! Late have I loved Thee! Behold Thou wert within, and I abroad, and there I searched for Thee...Thou wast with me, but I was not with Thee..." To recognize this presence is the beginning, for if God is within us, so is God's world with its significance and beauty. One of the many ways this wider world impinges on our consciousness is through dreams. Jung speaks of archetypes — primordial images we all carry within us and which we all share. They are like a common deeper human language. Dreams place us in contact with these images. It may be a parent bearing no resemblance to ours. Or a tiger. Or a pearl. Or the shoelace I didn't tie. When they come to us in the night they speak. Our job is to listen.

Carl Gustav Jung believed that there are "big dreams", which have a wider significance- and little, or more personal, dreams. But even if one has an important dream, how is it to be interpreted? In the years before World War II Jung several times dreamed of being on a train passing through a countryside covered with blood. He wondered if this was the announcement of a coming psychosis. But when the war broke out he understood the significance of the dream. All of which means that most dreams do need interpretation.

The first modern to suggest a system of interpretation was Sigmund Freud. But what turned into a relatively pan-sexualist

code of interpretation left some of his followers dissatisfied — notably Jung who saw the unconscious not as a field of personally repressed memories but rather as an *opening* to the universal world of shared symbols and meanings. The break between these two men led to the development of two very different modes of dream interpretation.

It needs to be said that no dream interpretation is infallible. Sometimes the dreamer just knows what the dream is saying to him or her but far more frequently this is not the case. A formal methodology to work with a dream may be helpful but it may not yield the desired fruit. How does one find this fruit?

There are established ways of working with this material. Some books can help. For example John Sanford's *Dreams, God's Forgotten Language* can be a good introduction for Christians. Anthony Stevens *Dreams and Dreaming, Personal Myths* is more technical but very thorough. There are others but it is worth taking the trouble to research a good source — and notably the author's level of training.

Another possibility is finding an analyst — or a well-conducted dream group — or a wise spiritual director. What does not help are the legions of self-help books on how to interpret your dreams. This is not a "how to" world and thinking it is can lead to real problems. For appropriate help with dreams a person with long experience of life and perhaps long study is much to be desired. Yet another way to go is to find a workshop on dreams conducted by a Jungian analyst.

So, what is the connection between dreams and spirituality? The two fields interweave. They both require our attention. They both suggest the importance of a wise spiritual direction — and the un-wisdom of "going it alone". And they both offer us riches far beyond what the eye can see. ❖

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On Easter & Pentecost

FR. VINCENT MARTIN, OSB

Adapted from a longer talk given on May 15, 1993. Please note that while this lecture has been edited, the unique "flavor" of Fr. Vincent's delivery has been, for the most part, maintained.

IN THE OLD DAYS, BEFORE the Vatican II liturgical reforms, we had eight days of celebration for Pentecost. It took me quite a few years personally to get used to the fact we now don't have that time. I did not understand, something did not make sense to me. I *love* the liturgical reforms. I love all of them, practically. I was in the spirit of Vatican II in 1930. Some of my teachers made the Council. What then was the problem? It suddenly came to my mind that maybe what troubled me is the problem of color. You cannot talk about the Holy Spirit except in red. You can't talk of the Holy Spirit in white! Jesus Christ and His saints are in white! Then I realized the celebration of the Holy Spirit is not the day of Pentecost, but it is all the Paschal times; all the fifty days of the Paschal time really ought to be a celebration of the Holy Spirit.

Obviously, it is not simply a matter of the color red or the color white. *The* crux of the problem is the relationship of Jesus of Nazareth to the Holy Spirit.

In the Western Church, in the Latin Church, in the Middle Ages, they developed the theology of the *Filioque* where Christ as the eternal Word of God is breathing the Holy Spirit with the Father. The Holy Spirit comes from the Father and comes from Christ. *You cannot talk about the Holy Spirit without talking about Christ.*

If you study the bible carefully you have to first go back to the Hebrew scripture where we find that God is intensely personal. For the Jews God is personal, but God is not a person. That seems very strange for us, God is intensely personal. He is alive, conscious, He is active, doing. But it is not the same as saying you are a person, I am here, God. Cats and dogs are not persons. But man, even a little baby, is a person. God is not that kind of person one with all the limitations of a human person. God is infinite. The Hebrew

Scriptures express God as having a personal life; and that is the reason they use a lot of anthropomorphic terms. God seems sometimes to behave like a human being. God does this, and God does that. Everybody agrees these are symbols to convey the idea that God is personal. God is wise, God is powerful, God spoke to Israel, God spoke to Moses and to the great prophets. God is somehow talking to us.

But there is also very clearly the manifestation of power. Not only does God create everything, but once in a while He will come in and do something like having mother Sarah have a baby when it seems impossible, or manifesting Himself to Moses on Mount Sinai, or cutting the Red Sea in two. For the Western mind, trained through Greek philosophy and modern science, when we read the Hebrew Scriptures we ask, "Please, be precise. What exactly do you mean?" Many expressions are very vague.

When we speak about God we have to be very careful. A lot of theologians have not been very careful. It is very difficult to say anything whatsoever about the inner life of God. God is absolutely unknown. He is the cloud of unknowing. He does not clearly reveal Himself, what He is in Himself, someone well known. In our present condition this kind of knowledge we cannot have of what is the inner life of God. Karl Rahner says to stop talking about the inner life of God. But what we know is God acting toward us, which means God acting outside Himself. God is infinite and the world is very finite. It is not God when God creates the world. Ultimately we are not able to think except in our space and our time. If we conceive of God we somehow have to put Him in space and time. Space and time are part of our creation, *and* God is outside that. God creates, He does things which are not God. An artist paints a picture which is not the artist, even if *he* paints a picture of himself. God creates the world, but it is not part of God. God works outside. And precisely, all



these things like the glory of God, the power of God, the wisdom of God, the word of God, are not so much in terms of the inner life of God but in terms of the relationship to what God is doing, which is not God. That we can know.

We *can* have an intuition or a mystical experience that at this moment we are created by God. We are at this moment in the creative act of God. Isaiah the prophet in the temple of Jerusalem, had that tremendous vision of God (chapter 6). Obviously, there was communication between God and Isaiah, and Isaiah saw very clearly God acting.

Go back to Galilee and identify with a teenager called Jesus. On Friday night He has a nice Sabbath meal and goes to spend a few hours in the synagogue. He does that every week. You can imagine the singing, the reading of the Torah. What is going on in His heart, in His *spirit*? As a human being He must have some kind of image of God. Each time they sing Adonai or read the Torah, JESUS, like a

good Benedictine, would have His mind in harmony with what His lips *say*. Jesus in His human nature, as a human being, has a Trinitarian experience. Though He was God made flesh, and specifically the Word of God made flesh, nevertheless, living His human life He had to relate to the Father.

Luke insists on the *prayer* of Jesus. He spent forty days in the desert of Judea to pray. When He can't stand His disciples, He goes up to the top of the mountain and spends the night in prayer. He has that deep communion with the Father. That must be a Trinitarian experience. The Holy Spirit never acts alone. The Word of God never acts alone.

It is very important that we start to grasp the aspect of complementarity in God's activity. Saint Irenaeus, at the end of the second century, has this beautiful image of God creating and saving us through His two hands, the Word and the Spirit. Our hands are similar except they are separate. We must think of God's

activity as process, as doing something, and realize He does it in two entirely different ways which are completely complementary. What we have been celebrating from Christmas until Good Friday—Epiphany, Purification, all of Lent up to the tragedy of Good Friday, is God getting out of Himself, God giving Himself, and when we have the Eucharist it is “My body broken, given to you.” The mystery of the Word speaking to Abraham, to Moses, to the prophets, speaking through the lips of Jesus Christ, it is God who comes to us not really to tell us what God is but to show us what He would like us to be, what He is trying to create, and He lets us finish it, but helping us, guiding us, trying to imprint His own image on what He creates. Christ comes out of God to try to imprint on matter the image of God. It is so

fantastic that finally He identifies totally with the human being. He who was in the form of God took the form of a slave.

In the Spirit He takes us to Himself. The Word *is* giving and the Spirit *is* accepting, receiving. Love is to give yourself, to be generous, to empty yourself. It is very seldom you have an understanding of love as *accepting*, as receiving. If you understand love as receiving, as accepting of the other, it is more difficult than to give yourself. If you give yourself you feel good. “I am generous, I am good.” But to accept the other as other is much more difficult. If you read *the* famous hymn of St. Paul in 1 Cor. 13, it is an amazing chapter. If you give yourself, this is not charity. Charity is to be patient, to accept. It is really to receive.

Basically in our spiritual life, how do we stand before God? What is important to feel as we stand before God, *as* Jesus when he was among us, living like a good Jewish boy, later on as a rabbi? How did He pray, *how* did He feel before God? Jesus had to struggle. Don’t think everything came to Jesus on a silver platter. He had a lot of struggle. He was trying to live the will of God but He had also complete trust, confidence, security of being accepted.

It is so important that we experience this at Pentecost. Jesus says “don’t call anyone father except My Father.” In a certain way Jesus is the Fatherhood of God become visible. The Spirit is the Motherhood of God, which is invisible. The Holy Spirit *IS* like the wind. Nobody knows where it comes from and where it goes. *It* is very bad to represent God the Father in any human form. But the Church forbade any human representation of the Holy Spirit. We use symbols like wind and the dove.

We have *been* so involved in the humanity of Christ we do not go beyond it. We are stuck there. Very seldom do you hear a sermon on the Holy Spirit, you can’t touch it, you can’t see it. There is nothing concrete. When you have a sense of the Holy Spirit you return to a sense of God and you find this oneness with Jesus

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Interior Recollection as a Means for Peace

THE WITNESS OF SAINT ELIZABETH OF THE TRINITY

DR. ANTHONY LILLES

DO THE PROBLEMS OF OUR time call for a return to mental prayer? Some argue that silent prayer is a counter-intuitive and even a counter-productive effort in these days of social and political turmoil. Recently canonized, Elizabeth of the Trinity, a twentieth century Carmelite mystic suggests otherwise. Born in the midst of the religious oppression that stamped pre-World War France, her spiritual mission promoted the practice of mental prayer, specifically the silence of recollection. Rather than a form of escapism, she recommended this adoring silence even as she faced acute physical suffering and death.

There is little doubt that no other twentieth century mystic has stirred the renewal of mental prayer that the spiritual mission of Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity has occasioned. Saint John Paul II, Garrigou-Lagrange, Louis Bouyer and Hans Urs von Balthasar have all extolled her writings. Sainly bishops

like Cardinal Nguyen von Thuan refer to her as a reliable authority for spiritual growth. Contemplative communities, like the Carthusians, claim that her writings have aided the practice of contemplation by recovering devotion to the Divine Persons of the Trinity.

Her mission is not simply for other contemplatives or priests. In ways that recall the letters of St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, most of St. Elizabeth’s own letters and major works were devoted to the lay faithful. Most notable of all, Saint Elizabeth’s offering “O My God, Trinity whom I adore” connects, by means of humble petition, the stillness and peacefulness of deep prayer with devotion to the Triune God. The “Mystic of Dijon” is the only twentieth century woman saint quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Saint Elizabeth does not offer an escape from difficult questions, but a way to face them. Saint Elisabeth’s doctrine sees silent prayer as an essential part of this journey. She herself relied on prayer to face the

✧ misery threatening her own life at an early age. Though she died in her mid-twenties, because of what she discovered in this prayer, she became a compelling advocate for the need for silent recollection as a means to personal peace.

We need this message today. Bereft of prayerful silence, human dignity is in great peril. Driven to neglect our spiritual needs in our noisy culture, our children cut themselves, our teenagers dope themselves, and almost everyone else spends their lives running away from themselves. Instead of breaking through the haunting alienation that weighs us down, social networking seems to have rendered our plight even more unbearable. Instead serving one another in faithful love, family members simply do not know how to be with each other, how to listen, how to bear with one another. Many find themselves depressed under a burden of guilt or else desperately drowning in shattered expectations. Others are driven by frantic anxiety for more control, or prestige, or wealth; but very, very few ever find peace.

We lack peace because we are fatherless. This is not Saint Elizabeth's insight but that of John Paul II. In his play, *Radiation of Fatherhood*, he invites us to understand that every father is meant to be a radiation of God the Father. God the Father personifies the Divine Gentleness that every father owes his children. Only restrained omnipotence delicately confers blessing, identity and purpose that the human heart needs. Each human father is the imperfect radiation of this Divine Gentleness insofar as he is present to his children in this way.

In our unrestrained culture, we despise fatherhood and are abandoned by it so that this blessing, even on the most basic human level, is lost to us. Yet this dehumanized society of ours is just one more in the history of humanity that has suffered the absence of this love. This wound in our humanity goes back to our first parents. Christ came that this blessing might be restored to us. It is in

the wounds of the Crucified Christ that this "father wound" is healed — for through His wounds alone are these wounds filled with a fullness of love.

It is into this misery, even the contemporary American expression of it, the spiritual mission of Elizabeth of the Trinity extends the saving mystery of the Word of the Father. She opens silent prayer to the wonders of the eternal love of the Father and the true meaning of our human existence that only this Word can reveal. She puts forward the unity of the Divine Persons as excessively tender and personal mystery in which the soul can be established and enveloped in stillness and peace. She is convinced that Christ offered His death for our sakes that we might discover our true home in the "bosom" of the Trinity, that we might be covered under the loving blessing of the Father's love.

Having lost her father as a very young child, she was prone to outbursts of anger. Indeed, after one tantrum, her mother was so exasperated that she threatened to send little Sabeth to a boarding school for troubled youth (just down the street from their apartment). We refer to this unfortunate episode only to point out that her prayer was not the result of self-mastery. She did not have any sense of control at all when her devotion to Christ in prayer began. While she was still prone to volatility, little Sabeth discovered the gift of mental prayer.

Angry outbursts are not unusual when a child loses a parent. Their whole world, once secure, has suddenly become uncertain. Lashing out is no more than a grasp for security. This is not merely a psychological phenomenon: it is a spiritual one. Without a sense of God's providence in one's life, there will always be an effort to find security and to meet other basic needs in destructive ways. There are many today whose lives are out of control because they do not know the love that God has for them. What is unusual, and what many cannot find today, is the encouragement

to bow one's head in silent adoration so that the Trinity might raise us above heartache and insecurity, whatever the pain that binds us down.

Elisabeth's First Communion was a decisive moment. Her friends testified that some profound grace of prayer was given to her. She was drawn into silence. While the other children were eager to go to a party after Mass,



Sabeth wanted to remain in prayer, whispering to a friend, "I am no longer hungry. God has fed me."

Her awareness of the presence of God within her began to grow. She experienced an immense love in this personal presence of God draw her into deep silence. She was concerned with whether this loving presence of God within her was real and not her imagination. She turned to the Carmelite

Monastery in her neighborhood for guidance as this grace unfolded through her teenage years and was fed with the writings of Teresa of Avila and, later, Therese of Lisieux.

In the Carmelite tradition, mystical wisdom consists precisely in the awareness of God's presence that Saint Elizabeth was experiencing. Spiritual exercises that involve reasoning, imagination or memory give way to the prayer of recollection. In recollection, one acknowledges gentle loving awareness of the Lord as personally present to the soul by faith and wants to linger on this truth. As this awareness grows, all of one's natural powers find rest in God's personal presence, and the desire to engage in theological reasoning or imaginings subsides. God Himself allures the soul into this sacred silence.

This kind of mental prayer marks a transition according to the great Carmelite Doctors. Prayer shifts from what the soul can achieve through spiritual exercises to a more receptive posture. The Trinity begins to act in a new and unfamiliar way. Sometimes new divine activity is very consoling and delightful. At other times, this spiritual work is so delicate and subtle, the soul feels as if nothing is going on at all. Either way, the soul is drawn out of itself and into a profound solitude and stillness where it encounters God. It is as God establishes the soul in this peaceful stillness that the soul begins to find a new freedom. It is less concerned with itself and its own experience, and a little more receptive to what the Lord is doing. God is now free to disclose Himself in ways that, until now, the soul did not have the freedom to receive.

This kind of prayer disposed Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity to deeper encounters with God and she wanted those whom she loved to share in these graces. To help draw souls out of "self" and enter into this deep silence became Saint Elizabeth's spiritual mission. She promised that even after death it would increase her joy to help those who asked her make this "wholly simple, wholly loving"

movement. She was adamant that, once a soul entered this kind of silence, it was vulnerable to a deeper encounter with God, a “Divine Impact.”

The “Divine Impact” is not something that she describes as an emotional or intellectual experience. It is a heavenly and Christological transformation by faith. One’s whole existence participates in the life of eternal praise in heaven through unity in the mystery of Christ — the identification with Him and His work of redemption by choosing to be aware of His presence and to live one’s own life in imitation of Him. This is possible because His presence transmits or communicates His truth and life to the soul. Through this intimacy with Christ, the soul established in peace and enveloped in love participates in the very life of the Trinity even to the point of extending its saving mystery.

Why is the prayer of recollection able to address the deep need for connection, for love, for the paternity that only God can provide? Saint Elizabeth ponders a connection between silent recollection and the great peaceful stillness of the “unchanging” Holy Trinity. The silence of recollected prayer is not empty for her. The love of God the Father fills this stillness through the obedience of Christ unto death and the fire of the Holy Spirit. She describes this as God’s “exceeding” love, an immensity in which she loses herself.

Those who studied her original manuscripts know that she struggled not to overstate the relationship between this life and the life of heaven. She knew that the fullness of beatitude that awaits us in the life should be distinguished from the peacefulness found in silent prayer. Yet, at the same time, she was not satisfied with the notion that there is no

connection at all between the peace that God can give us now and the peace that awaits us in the life to come.

To be established in the stillness and peacefulness of heaven even in this life is a possibility for Saint Elizabeth because the Father’s blessing is breaking in on us in this present moment. The glory of heaven is not something far off in the future or else at all remote from human affairs. Instead, prayerful silence opens up spiritual mysteries right in the midst of the nitty-gritty smudge of daily life. She even described time itself as “eternity begun and still in progress.”

The recollected soul emerges as a point of connection between time and eternity, the life of heaven and life in the world. The coincidence of time and eternity in the soul moreover is transformative in Saint Elizabeth’s thought. Everything in one’s whole existence becomes a “sacrament” that gives us God. The progress of eternity in human affairs implicates the recollected soul more profoundly in the wonders that God is accomplishing in the here and now. In this recollection, the uniqueness of our lives and the great mystery of our personal existence is not diminished, but made vulnerable to the praise of the glory of the Holy Trinity. ✠



Dr. Anthony Lilles is the Academic Dean at Saint John’s Seminary in Camarillo, and a professor for the Avila Institute of Spiritual Formation. He is a specialist in St.

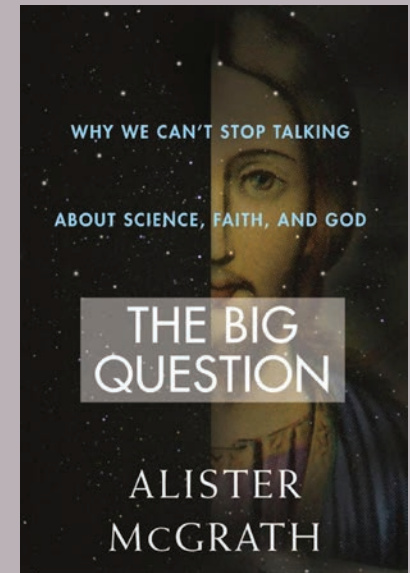
Elizabeth of the Trinity and the Carmelite Tradition.

QUARTERLY BOOK REVIEW

by fr. philip edwards, osb

ABOUT FOUR YEARS AGO, JUDY CANNATO’s wonderful workbook, *Radical Amazement*, thrust into my Sadducean hands by an enthusiastic (and very dear) Oblate and friend, was reviewed in an Eastertide issue of this *Chronicle*. This more recent book club offering in hardcover expands and pads out what the paperback so concisely presents. It is like moving from the high stool before the microscope on a counter in a research laboratory to the comfort of a wingback chair in the book-lined study of an Oxford don — in this instance, an “Oxbridgean” (he both studied and taught at Oxford and Cambridge) research scientist and ordained theologian.

Both writers are stimulated by an obiter dictum of Albert Einstein, “rapturous amazement,” that provides her with her book’s title and him with that of his beginning chapter, “From Wonder to Understanding.” I find personal enrichment and a better understanding as reasonable causes for adding this book to your reading list. While it has the classic character of a convert’s “once I was blind but now I see” sort of story of the author’s personal quest and engagement, it is rather more eager to shed light than to hurl anathemas. As he learned from a “gracious and sagacious” senior professor of theoretic chemistry, Charles A. Colson, Christian “faith did not call upon me to abandon my love of science, but to see it in a new way — indeed, to have a new motivation for its outcomes... the Christian articulation of a luminous vision of reality that offered insight into the scientific process and its successes, while at the same time setting out a larger narrative that allowed engagement with questions raised by science yet lying beyond its capacity to answer. Coulson ... helped me grasp the idea of the ultimate coherence of



THE BIG QUESTION
Why We Can't Stop Talking About Science, Faith and God
ALISTER MCGRATH
St. Martin's Press, 2015
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science and faith, which remains with me to this day and is set out in this book. Science, like faith, seeks to find and explore a coherent and satisfying understanding of the world in which we live. Might they not do so together, learning from each other’s strengths and weaknesses?” (p. 11).

The greater part of this opening chapter is its concluding section under the subheading, “The Great Myth: The Perpetual ‘Conflict’ of Science and Religion” (pp. 14–22): “... the cultural establishment of the West seems to have locked itself into a ‘science versus religion’ groupthink. A narrow and dogmatic view of reality which holds that any thinking person must choose science over religion. Someone like myself who now sees them, when rightly understood, as having the potential to be mutually enriching is dismissed simply as mad, bad or sad — and possibly all

three" (pp. 14–15). "A solid body of scholarship has gradually built up in recent years, forcing revision of older understanding of the relation of science and faith.... The 'warfare of science and religion' narrative has had its day. We need to draw a line under this and explore better ways of understanding their relationship" (p. 20).... "This book offers both a correction of outdated perceptions and a re-mapping of imaginative possibilities. I want to explore a way of seeing things that is enriched by both science and religion at their best and that I have found to be both intellectually and imaginatively engaging. Let me emphasize the importance of that word, *seeing*. Both scientific theories and theological doctrines can be viewed as invitations to see things in a certain way, to imagine the world in a certain manner — a manner that is believed to be both warranted and truthful, and whose truthfulness is to be measured in part by the degree of intelligibility and coherence it allows us to perceive" (pp. 21–22).

Seeing is expounded in his third chapter, "Theory, Evidence and Proof: How Do We Know What Is True?", and most specifically in the subsection, "Theory In Science: Seeing Things Correctly":

When confronted with a mass of observations, the scientist's fundamental instinct is to try to figure out what "big picture" or "theory" makes the most sense of them.... The scientific quest aims to find the best way of "seeing things," the approach that makes most sense of what is actually observed, free from ideological pressures of any kind... evidence and theories have changed, and will continue to change. The astronomer Carl Sagan made this point elegantly, and it needs to be heard clearly: "Science is much more than a body of knowledge. It is a way of thinking. This is central to its success. Science invites us to let the facts in, even when they don't conform to our preconceptions. It counsels us to carry alternatives in our heads and see which ones best match the facts [p. 53].

The bulk of this book continues in trying to flesh out "Sagan's wise counsel 'to carry alternative hypotheses in our heads and see which ones best match the facts'.... In what follows, we will look at some of these and see how they help us make sense of things" (p. 54). Beginning at that point with "A Case Study: Theories of the Solar System," he follows a pattern of presenting significant moments and ideas in the development of scientific thinking in the light of his own developing religious thought and experience: "As I made this transition from atheism to Christianity... I experienced a new way of 'seeing things,' as if I had been given a new mental map" (p. 67). One whole chapter is given to "Darwin and Evolution: New Questions for Science and Faith." The three following chapters are more generally philosophical, but the last chapter's title, "Science And Faith: Making Sense of the World — Making Sense of Life," reprises what he said following "Sagan's wise counsel": "Later I read N.R. Hanson's work on history and presuppositions. The process of 'looking at' nature is actually 'theory-laden,' in that what we 'see' is often shaped by assumptions drawn from our culture or existing theories. Theories are like a pair of spectacles; they affect what we see. I was drawn to faith by its ability to explain things — to provide a 'big picture' which wove together the threads of experience to disclose a pattern. I later discovered that both the celebrated journalist G.K. Chesterton and C.S. Lewis returned to faith for a very similar reason" (pp. 66–68).

He ends that particular chapter (3) in the company of Chesterton, Lewis, Dorothy Sayers, Simone Weil, and Sir Peter Medawar. McGrath himself says:

Christians have always held that their faith makes sense in itself and makes sense of the enigmas and riddles of our experience. The gospel is like an illuminating radiance that lights up the landscape of reality, to see things as they really are.... The ability to illuminate

reality is an important measure of the reliability of a theory and indicator of its truth. This concern for the illumination of reality naturally leads us to reflect on a statement that the leading British biologist Sir Peter Medawar made towards the end of his life: "Only humans find their way by a light that illuminates more than the patch of ground they stand on." It is a striking assertion, which invites us to ask: what is the best light to illuminate our patch of ground? My narrative of enrichment suggests that both science and faith, when at their best, help us to make sense of who we are, why we are here and what we ought to do. We need that rich vision to enable us to live our lives to the full.

This book is printed by an American publishing house and distributed by an American book club for a general audience without any sort of ecclesiastic imprimatur, but its author is a Church of England clergyman with an official position as Andreas Idreos Professor of Religion at Oxford and so is close to home with his atheist/antitheist antagonists. Those of us of a more "orthodox" persuasion, whether Roman, Eastern or Reform, might wish for a bit more of inquisitorial "bite", but the basic and irenic thrust to "speak the truth in love" is here. His last chapter eloquently rounds up his intentions:

My task in this book is not to provide a defense of either science or Christianity, but explore what happens when they are allowed to speak to each other, quietly and respectfully, disregarding the predictable outrage of those tiresome and small-minded guardians of a spurious cultural purity who feel threatened by this discussion and want to close it down before it even gets underway. This book can be seen as both an argument for the interweaving of a scientific and a Christian narrative and an exploration of the issues and possibilities that emerge when it is done, mapping out the intellectual landscape that is opened up when things are seen in this way. And let me emphasize again that there

is no question of turning science into religion, or religion into science. Science is science; religion is religion. All that I am proposing is that they talk to each other, seriously and respectfully, and reflect on the more richly textured way of seeing things which results from doing so [p. 208]. ✠



Fr. Philip was born the year this monastic community was founded in China. Newman, especially his *Grammar of Assent*, was important in his intellectual formation. He made his monastic profession at Valyermo in 1962.

ON EASTER AND PENTECOST *from page 10*

Christ. He is the head, we are the members; He is the vine, we are the branches. In this oneness with the *Risen* Christ we stand before the Risen Christ and see that God comes to us. He is calling, he *is* challenging and pushing, trying to change us. The Spirit is the perfume, the oil, the kindness. You are completely understood, completely accepted by the Father, are a unique person, are accepted by God as unique.

Pray hard, ask God to help you understand a little more, but not primarily about His *inner life* and all the speculation about the mystery of the Trinity. Read the bible and try to identify with Jesus Christ and to perceive in faith the activity of God really *giving* Himself, especially at Mass in the Eucharist, and gathering everybody through *the* mystery of the breaking of the bread, into God. We generally are so busy and have not much time, but this is really what God has been trying to give to man. ✠

Fr. Vincent Martin (†1999) was a founding monk of St. Andrew's. He was a noted preacher, oblate director and retreat master.

À PROPOS CES FLEURS

here we go
le printemps
est arrivé
feast of green
spread yellow
butter on
the fields

sky mantle
blue
every year
your flowers
yellow spring
rise breathe
April in
exhale
in May
month for
Mary
these flowers
new rosaries
spring for
thirty days
tendrils
fragrant
litanies so
apropos
ces fleurs
what they
do is pray
say *Salve*

—Terry van Vliet

Terry van Vliet is an oblate of Saint Andrew's Abbey. The editor looks forward to reading more of his work.



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