

KENOSIS – 3-25-18

A Meditation on Philippians 2:6-11

Jesus, you did not count equality with God
something to be grasped,
but rather you emptied yourself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in the likeness of men;
and in this state you became obedient,
obedient even to the point of death,
death on a cross.

Is not the suffering that we bear, Jesus,
a participation in this kenosis,
in this mystery of redemptive love?
You seek to lead us, to draw us powerfully
into the truth of childhood,
the beauty of belovedness before you,
there to repose, the rest, to play.
And yet from this place
we often still experience darkness and obscurity,
the mystery of suffering and of pain.
But let us know that, still,
the truth of childhood abides,
deeper than everything,
and alone gives everything meaning:
the all-enfolding Circle of Repose,
the intimacy of Love, in hearts' indwelling.
But the Cross, the Cross, Jesus,
is it not an expression of this Circle,
a concrete manifestation of it in our world:
the sacrifice that is born from pure acceptance,
and pure acceptance lived in an intense way?

It is the Circle penetrating,
penetrating into the darkness of our world,
there to become present, Father, Son, and Spirit,
in the depths of our pain and our sorrow,
sharing with us, understanding us,
embracing us in compassion and,
yes, in loving identification.
This irradiation of divine light in the darkness,
this piercing of the enveloping Circle,
through the Cross, into the narrowness
of our fallen and isolated human life—
this breaks open our narrowness from within
and illumines the obscurity of life,
so that we may find ourselves liberated
and taken up into your enveloping mystery,
into the glory and happiness of risen life.

And what is the risen life but childhood,
the intimacy of the Trinity penetrating

and being expressed fully in heart and flesh,
and taking up the body, the whole of existence,
into the current of acceptance and mutual self-giving
ever flowing between the Father and the Son
in the movement of the single Spirit...
and the intimacy, the perfect embrace
that you eternally share.

Thus, even though it feels as though,
in the pain and darkness, everything is lost,
the opposite is true...
But we are invited to let go,
to surrender all totally
and not to look back—
to share in your loving kenosis,
so that we may descend into the place
of having nothing, no strength, no control...
but of being pure openness in love, in vulnerability,
pure powerlessness, pure trust, pure dependency,
in the willing and total abandonment of self.

Here, yes, the Cross and the Circle intersect...
for what is this dependency,
this surrender of self to you in utter trust,
what is this radical openness,
without conditions or counting the cost,
but *the inner truth of childhood*
that you live eternally before the Father?
The darkness, the pain, the emptiness
in which it, in this life, is lived,
is something that will pass away
when the veil is at last rent,
and we pass over into the fullness
of the Trinity's undimmed light.

Here there is a mirror-image of light
in the very darkness and anguish, Jesus,
which you have welcomed from us,
and taken, compassionately, into yourself.
Yes, for in both—the fullness of divine life,
where Father, Son, and Spirit are united
in total self-giving and reciprocal acceptance,
in the joy of inseparable and consummate union,
as well as in the darkness of apparent estrangement,
in the solidarity of your whole being
with sinful, isolated, and broken humanity—
in both of these the same Love is active,
the same Love is accepting and giving.
And here it crosses over every boundary,
uniting in itself those who are estranged,
and drawing us, drawing us in you,
into the light and joy of the Father,
there, eternally, with you to dwell.

The flame of your sonship, Jesus,
continues to burn unquenched,
and the light of Love shines uneclipsed,
even though in your human experience
you descend into our darkness
and surrender all totally for our sake.
For here there is a direct connection
between your acceptance of your being
unceasingly from your eternal Father
and your surrender of this to us and for us.
How can you lose it, when it is you yourself?
And how can you cling to it,
when it is purely a gift from your Father?

No, in giving it away you do not lose it,
but rather simply express it in this world,
in an intense way, piercing our darkness,
manifesting its inmost, enduring core,
even when the externals are stripped away,
and you are naked, poor, powerless,
and apparently abandoned (taking our pain)
as you hang lovingly upon the wood of the Cross.

Here the Trinitarian self-giving, the joy of divine life,
is mysteriously alive and active in the heart of our night.
And in this way the Circle of Divine Joy and Communion
pierces (as if in disguise) into our narrow circle of sin,
and in this way breaks it open, illumining it,
shattering our preconceptions, our resistance,
and speaking powerfully to us, in noble silence,
the Word of Love that we have forgotten how to hear.
And this Word, dear Jesus, we perceive
as we abide in silence before your Crucified Body,
listening with eyes and heart to the Mystery

which echoes noiselessly here.

And imperceptibly, Jesus, joy is begotten in us,
issuing forth from the wells of your Sacred Heart.
We come to know, deeply, intimately,
the unbreakable and enduring joy of childhood,
of being perfectly, uniquely known and loved.
And from this place—and only within it—
we gradually find ourselves drawn more deeply
into the heart of this mysterious night.
Even if it feels like we are losing everything,
the truth is that this whole movement
—this journey in the nocturnal darkness,
in the willing surrender of all things—
this occurs enfolded in the Joy of divine life
which can never be taken away.
Indeed, in this poverty we truly lose nothing,
but rather are opened to receive,
to receive all things anew with your love
and shot through with the radiance of grace.

Further, in our own unique existence
we can allow you, Jesus, to perpetuate in us
the mystery of your own Redeeming Love,
piercing in us into the darkness of others,
and through us reaching out to embrace them,
to illumine their sorrow and isolation,
and to carry them—to carry all of us—
back into the light, the joy, of the Father,
into the inmost embrace of the Trinity,
where you, Jesus, eternally dwell,
and which you have truly never left,
even for a moment, but in which, now,
you have totally encompassed us.