

## **INSCAPE July 2015**

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**Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:**

**May you always be consciously aware of the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the love and mercy of God the Father, and the communion of the Life-Giving Holy Spirit dwelling within your heart!**

### **A BROKEN HEART**

In that delightful modern odyssey into the inner world of expanded consciousness of Carlos Castaneda in his book *Journey to Ixtlan*, Don Juan, the Indian shaman or spiritual guide, teaches his disciple the necessity of becoming a warrior. Such a warrior does not fear the enemies of the desert that might destroy him. Rather he has so much *élan vital*, such a verve to live fully, that he bravely attacks the enemies that might threaten his promise of greater life.

The master teaches the disciple how to enter into the desert and how to listen in silence to the real world for the first time. Therein doing the battle of forces around him, he would begin to see what was always there, but which most people fail to see, Don Juan explains: "What stopped inside you yesterday was what people have been telling you the world is like. You see, people tell us from the time that we are born that the world is such and such and so and so, and naturally we have no choice but to see the world the way people have been telling us it is."

One must be alert, courageous, and "trained" to deal with the full existential realm of the interior life. If the individual is ill-prepared for the plunge into this deeper level of expanded consciousness, it will be totally self-destructive. One needs a spiritual director, guru, shaman, or roshi. The names differ, but their roles are always the same. It is for this reason that every form of mysticism within a fixed religion or spirituality has insisted strongly on a "spirit-filled" person, capable from his or her own experiences to traverse the circuitous ways of the interior life and from experiential knowledge of human nature and (within the Christian Tradition) the study of Holy Scripture, Sacred Living Tradition, the Desert Fathers, and True Theology to beget the disciple into the life of the Spirit.

For the Christian mystic, the one who wishes to live at the center of his/her true being in transcendent union with the Source of all Being, there is a need to be able to discern the authentic workings of the Holy Spirit from the evil spirits that so easily introduce "tares" where the Divine Sower sowed only good seeds. The greatest function of a spiritual guide is to warn the neophyte against the pitfalls of the inner world and to encourage the disciple against the threat of what Paul Tillich calls "non-being."

### **NON-BEING**

Any of the states of expanded consciousness bring the anxiety of non-being. Tillich writes in his book *The Courage to Be*: "Basic anxiety is the anxiety of a finite being about the threat of non-being...Actualization of being implies the ability to take courageously upon oneself the anxiety of non-being."

For this reason Don Juan instructs his disciple, Carlos Castaneda: "The apprenticeship is long and arduous...in order to withstand the impact of such an encounter."

The Christian life has been described by Jesus Christ and his disciples as a death-unto-life experience. He describes this life as a denial of one's self, as a shouldering of one's cross and following him (Matthew 10:38, 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; 14:27). Jesus insisted that the seed had to fall into the earth and die before it could bring forth greater fruit (John 12:24).

Nicodemus was told by Jesus that he had to be reborn from above in order to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (John 3:3-5).

## **LAW OF INNER GROWTH**

But this is to describe the law of inner growth in all human lives. Made according to God's own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27), we possess the ability to stretch ourselves upward to attain new levels of transcendent meaningfulness by letting go of lower levels of being. Holy Scripture presents this conversion process in terms of an *exodus*, a passing-over to a state of becoming progressively free in the darkness and sterility of the desert that leads to the promised land.

Psychologists speak of it as a twofold movement. The first stage consists of accepting ourselves with honesty and without excuse. This is an awakening moment, revealing the truth that what we thought was our true personhood was in reality a false self. Many of us seek various ways of escaping this self-knowledge, such as great business with work or travel, or becoming couch potatoes—sitting in isolation—living in the dream world of non-reality.

Only if we learn to accept sincerely our existential self can we ever hope to open up to the second movement; namely, to hunger and thirst in the totality of our being; to be someone more noble, more loving, more in our oneness with God and neighbor and the entire universe. This is the *élan* (vigorous spirit or enthusiasm) toward new life. This is True Being calling us to experience our true selves in the Source as a unique manifestation of God's presence in human form on this earth.

But this can only follow the letting go of the false self and all the protective devices and techniques we have been using to secure the lie that that illusory person is the true self. And how most of us human beings detest the thought of the dying that will yield to new life! How we are afraid to enter into the depths of our unconscious in order that we might become more conscious of our beautiful, unique true self as we bring the brokenness in our heart to the healing power of Love itself, The Divine Physician, Our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ!

## **BREAKING THE FALSE IDOLS**

This conversion experience can also be described in terms of prayer, for every true conversion to living according to more transcendent values can come about only through the ultimate loving power that allows us to let go and surrender ourselves into his caring hands. In the initial stages of prayer we needed God, but we created him according to our own images and needs. He was to satisfy all of our creaturely needs, and, in fact, to help us retain that false self we lived for so many years.

The transitional point comes when we can look earnestly at our selves and begin to accept the fact that there is something false, unreal, inauthentic in the way we approach God. When we silence our hearts we not only have a burning desire to leave the husks of swine and claim our divine inheritance held out to us by our Heavenly Father through his Son and Holy Spirit, but we are also forced to confront a heart-consciousness of our brokenness. This brokenness deep within us seemingly rises up as darkness to eclipse the delicate light that would lead us to true freedom, purification, illumination, transfiguration, and divinization (vision of God) into our unique, true self, our essential self, that self that manifests God's beauty in earthly form.

In the words of Gabriel Marcel, such a person "has become once and for all a question for himself." The most important question we must ask ourselves daily is: Will we stay inside ourselves, groping for ways in which we can let God be truly God instead of running "outside" to be diverted from the call to new life? Marcel describes the feeling of inner emptiness that

comes to the person who courageously looks inside: When we are at rest, we find ourselves almost inevitably put in the presence of our own inner emptiness, and this very emptiness is in reality intolerable to us. But there is more, there is the fact that through this emptiness we inevitably become aware of the misery of our condition, a 'condition so miserable,' says Pascal, "that nothing can console us when we think about it carefully." Hence the necessity of diversion.

Such an emptiness within reveals in an amazing burst of light inside of darkness how dishonest we have been toward God in our prayer. We see how we have hidden behind doctrines and liturgical rituals—structures of our religious or spiritual life that served to guarantee both a false security and a closing off to God's continued call to deeper conversion.

Now through a deepening faith we have the courage to look at our habitual attitude toward God. Shame fills our hearts at the brazenness of how we have attempted to use God for our own selfish purposes. Need, not true love, was behind most of our prayer life. Now prayer becomes a desire to crash down the false idols, the images and words used to present ourselves to God as though we were his equals, or worse, that he is an object, at our beck and call.

The working of God's Spirit of grace to instill into us anxiety, fear, and disgust as we confront our existence in the light of our "non-being" is not merely a self-centered reflection on death. It is an ontological "nostalgia" to rise from such a deathly condition and return home to discover our true selves in the passionate love of our heavenly Father. It is to be in love with our Father (Who is Good) in total self-surrendering trust.

## **THE DAIMONIC**

We cannot understand the religious meaning of the term "heart" unless we also see that out of the "heart" also "come evil intentions: murder, adultery, fornication, theft, perjury, slander. These are the things that make a man unclean" (Matthew 13:19-20), as Jesus preached. The ancient Greeks referred to the *daemon* or *daimoni* within all of us. There are light and darkness coexisting in our hearts, the already beautiful, unique, loving, true person with our "essential "I", always being drawn by the Holy Spirit into greater conscious awareness of oneness with the Absolute Being, and also simultaneously the false or worldly ego.

## **DEVIL AND SYMBOL**

We can perhaps understand this relationship by going to the root meaning of "devil" (*diabolos* in Greek) and "symbol." *Diabolos* literally means to tear apart (*dia-bollein*). The opposite of diabolic is "symbolic," which is derived from the Greek verb *sym-bollein*, to throw together or unite. Dr. Rollo May (1909–1994), the popular American existential psychologist and author, gives us a keen insight in his explanation of the *daimonic*: "there lie in these words tremendous implications with respect to an ontology of good and evil. The symbolic is that which draws together, ties, integrates the individual in himself and with his group; the diabolic, in contrast, is that which disintegrates and tears apart. Both of these are present in the daimonic."

## **A PART OF A BROKEN WORLD**

From Sacred Scripture and human history we learn that we form a solidarity with the whole world in our brokenness, in "the sin of the world." We find our darkness to be a part of the world's darkness. We have inherited it simply by being a part of the human race. With King

David, we can all confess before God and other human beings: “For behold, I was formed in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5).

But you and I are individual persons who have become what we are and what we will be through our actions upon and reactions to other individual persons. Our parents, friends, teachers, wife, husband, children, enemies, and even “indifferent” acquaintances have helped to make us what we are by their attitudes, acts, and even omissions. It is here in our “heart,” both in the conscious and unconscious layers of our body, soul, and spirit levels, that we come face to face with the *daimonic* in all of us, that which is part of our broken state of inauthenticity and also that which explains the good and the creative in our lives with its great potential for even such greater beauty in the future, depending on our free cooperation with God’s grace.

## INTERRELATIONSHIPS

We can only grow in greater self-consciousness and hence in an awareness of ourselves as an individual *I*, capable of self-giving in true love, by relationships with other centers of consciousness, able to call us into being by their love given freely to us. We grow in a society, a stable group of human beings in communication (great potential through global contact) with each other. Saint Paul could write about the life and death of each of us and their influence on others: “For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For whether we live, we live to our Lord; and whether we die, we die to our Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we belong to the Lord” (Romans 14:7-8). Like Tennyson’s *Ulysses*, in all of our travels from the first moment of waking consciousness until this present moment and even to the end of our earthly existence, we can say: “I am a part of all that I have met.”

The interdependence on others, not only for our being, but for our being such and such a person, is testified to today by microbiology and the science of genetics. We inherit in birth not only the values of our parents, but through them the values of generations and generations that preceded them. What an amazing world of interrelationships science opens up to us! Each of the estimated 100 trillion cells in our body contains about 30,000 – 40,000 genes (region of DNA that controls a hereditary characteristic and carries biological information in a form that must be copied and transmitted from each cell to all its progeny), composed of deoxyribonucleic acid. Each DNA molecule stores coded information to be used to sustain and duplicate itself. Through such dependency upon our parents, we receive more than similar physical traits; we are also the recipients of much of their positive and negative qualities. We share in the brokenness even before we see the light of day.

## NOT FREE TO LOVE

We crave above all else in life to love and to be loved. But pitifully the mounting rate of lonely persons committing physical or psychological suicides, children from marriage-less relationships, the increase of broken marriages that end in divorce, the inability of so many parents to relate lovingly to their children and children to their parents, all point out how unfree we human beings are to love and receive love.

What inner brokenness we experience in what God meant to be both the most human and divine experience for us—namely, human love! We sincerely tell our loved ones that we really want to love them. But as we learn to enter into the depths of ourselves and others, opening ourselves in all of our “unmasked” self, we experience fears and doubts. We find a true confrontation with our unredeemed, hidden areas that come out as we see ourselves being mirrored in the openness of the other.

Demands of sensitivity and fidelity not known before are made as we receive the gift of the other. Self can no longer be the center, but we must seek humbly to serve only the unique godliness in the other. True love makes the terrifying demand on us to let the other be

completely him/herself. My selfish needs must yield to the godly desire to seek only to serve the uniqueness in the other, that which will fulfill the other's true self.

But what agony to let go and not hold on to the other! What a fear as my unreal self battles the hidden real self, as I struggle to "use" the other or die to the false in me to "serve" the other! I can so easily insist that the other person measure up to my expectations that means all too often to satisfy my selfish needs. In my selfishness I can lose the "symbolic," that which integrates and binds into a oneness, and I yield to the "diabolic," that which dis-integrates and scatters.

I can lose the sense of wonder, mystery, poetry and its going beyond my falsely constructed demands and insist that the other person be more the father or mother that I once needed to touch me and cuddle me.

## THE PAIN OF PRAYER

Human love is true prayer when we learn to die to our self-centeredness in order to open up to the creative presence of God in another. But in both true human love and prayer (can we truly separate the two: love of God and neighbor?), there is so much necessary pain and suffering. In both, if there is to be any progress, there must be a touching of two centers of consciousness and this always means pain and suffering.

In prayer, especially, we are driven by God's Spirit into the barren desert of our inner self, in the depths of our heart. Like Jesus, we are to encounter the *daimonic* in us, both the horrible areas of darkness, fear, brokenness, and the possibility of new, resurrectional light, new life to come forth as creative energy released when the darkness is confronted and transformed into the Light of Christ.

It takes courage and determination to go deeper into ourselves to confront the dark side in our heart. And for this reason, the majority of us in prayer stay up "on top" in a very controlled relationship with God and the person that we think we are, but that is not the real person that God wishes to love. We fear encountering so much ugliness in forms of darkness, painful memories, and distortions.

We fear the great temptation to push deeper into the unknown. Perhaps our small skiff (boat small enough for sailing or rowing by one person) on such troubled waters of the unconscious will easily capsize. Can we be sure that, going so deeply within ourselves, we will be able to return? The line is very thin between madness and ecstatic union with God.

But farther into our brokenness we must go. The figures within us taunt us and attack us with a fierceness that breaks all of our ego-power. We feel helpless, trapped, surrounded by the most hideous enemies the human mind could ever imagine. Are they real or are they illusion? What is real and what is unreal? Jesus Christ, come to my rescue! We implore God exactly like Saint Peter and his cry for immediate assistance "But when he saw that the wind was strong, he was afraid, and began to sink, and he raised his voice and said, My Lord, save me" (Matthew 14:30), begging Jesus to "have mercy on me, the greatest of sinners!"

The false posturing before God, the grand soliloquies that I have been directing to the ear of God all fall from my heart as so many dry leaves falling from trees that in autumn no longer have need of them. What I thought was important and significant in my life—fame, honor, sense pleasure, the joys shared with friends—all seem truly like worthless straw. How unimportant they all seem! How unimportant I seem in my self-controlled worldly ego!

## THE INNERMOST SELF

Whatever be the skein of knotted, twisted threads that have fashioned the tapestry of our lives (and so many of such influences were beyond our personal control), there lies deep within us another self, that true self of unrealized potentiality. In our brokenness, we are driven into our creaturely nothingness. What can we do to extricate ourselves from the overpowering forces that have mostly come originally from without, but now lie like unchained, wild beasts within us? Yet, we must recall "...for without Me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Such a confrontation with our inner brokenness and nothingness before such overwhelming forces of negativity and destructive force can be the turning point to a new life, a life of crying out for God's mercy and healing. Psychologist William Kraft speaks of our existential grasping of our nothingness in forms of loneliness, aloneness, depression, anxiety, guilt, frustration, anger, boredom, apathy, and anguish. We panic and become rigid, and cannot move our life in any direction. We experience the paralysis created by our own past actions...self-inflicted pain!

Deep within us lies our real self, the person unrealized as yet, but loved perfectly and infinitely by the triune God. God's Spirit hovers over this chaos, the darkness that could blaze forth into creative light, peace, and joy. If we could only stretch out and follow that thin, silvery streak of godly light out of the binding slavery into true freedom. It is here in our true self that God dwells, making his mansion (John 14:23), as we become more and more spirit, communicating freely unto intimate loving communion with God's Spirit.

## GOD'S HEALING LOVE

To live on this level of loving union with the indwelling Trinity is to burst the bonds of pre-deterministic forces from within us and to step out of the cave of crippling, stifling darkness into the bright day of spring. Only God is powerful enough to aid us in becoming "reborn" again from above in his Holy Spirit of love (John 3:3-5). Only in experiencing the healing love from a tender, loving God the Father, made manifest through the Spirit of the risen Jesus, can we rise from the brokenness of our past experiences to embrace new levels of a life in Christ, which is, as God always intended, to become our real self in the Word made flesh.

No longer do we have to be locked in the self-chosen prison of our narcissism, to obey the dictates of others as the sole criterion of truth. Our habitual, low profile, with all of our defenses to cover up our hurting inadequacies is replaced by an authentic humility, that shows us our true selves from God's view in the light of God's special gifts and endowments. Honesty and sincerity become like two bright shining beacons that dissipate any self-deceit from whatever cause.

This is a call to live in the freedom of the children of God. But it is a frightening call that demands daily courage to encounter the *daimonic* forces of darkness and to develop a new potential for greater aliveness to God's loving presence everywhere. Dr. Carl Rogers describes this freedom: "Freedom to be oneself is a frightening responsible freedom, and an individual moves toward it cautiously, fearfully, and with almost no confidence at first."

It is within ourselves, into our hearts that we must enter in honesty and poverty of spirit—that is, the silence to hear God speak his Still-pointed Word. Into the tomb of our inner darkness, the light of God's tender love bursts upon us. Tears of sorrow and repentance, tears of fright at our own non-being pour forth gently as God's soft, healing dew falls upon the cracked, parched earth of our heart to stir those seeds of new life into reality.

As we utter the words, "Have mercy on me a sinner, O God, in your loving-kindness" (Psalm 51:1), we continually hear his response that thrills us into new life: "This child of mine was dead and has come back to life, he was lost and is found" (Luke 15:24).

## PRAYER EXERCISE

As you enter into the cave of your heart, allow the images of this poetic meditation to flow gently like soothing, clean spring water over the brokenness that you discover lying within your heart as skeletons of the past. Surrender your inner darkness and the forces inside your heart that rise up and hold you mercilessly in bondage, preventing you from becoming free to walk in the newness of God's healing love in Christ Jesus. (Recalling the many hiking trails in the Great Smoky Mountains of Western North Carolina)

### *THE CAVE OF MY HEART*

I walk along the quiet mountain road.  
The full moon laughed with joy  
while the rest of nature slept.  
I entered into a crevice  
of a Rock near the stream.

There was peace.  
But then I felt God's presence  
slowly come upon me.  
Faster and faster He pursued me.  
I wasn't running from Him.  
I was entering into Him!

Deeper and deeper  
I plunged!  
I knew that somehow  
when I left this place  
I would always remain  
in the crevice,  
so full of God's peace and joy.

I had touched God.  
I had found Heaven on earth!  
God's Spirit had come upon me  
in the moonlit evening  
as I hid in the arms  
of God, my Beloved!

Oh, what healing Love  
comes over my brokenness!  
All healing comes from God  
in the desert cave  
when, I, in brokenness,  
call out to You, Divine Physician.

I will never be the same  
since You touched me  
and I hid in Your healing arms.  
New powers awake  
as spring-clarion sounds  
within the depths of that crevice,  
the Rock of my heart.

Locked-in petals  
of a bedewed rose  
gently let go  
to unveil a new harmony  
of many things captured  
in the union of one flower  
of exquisite beauty.

The chaotic past, dried bones  
of long yester-years  
receive the soft breath  
of God's Spirit of Love,  
and they become enfleshed  
into a living being.

I come out of the past  
as I cry to my Lord:  
"Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God,  
have mercy on me,  
a sinner."

Like butterfly bursting  
forth in melted gold  
with wet, tightly packed wings,  
I stretch upward.

Dry wings strengthen  
and lift me aloft  
to new, dizzying heights  
of union with God.

But then I hear  
that healing voice  
say to me,  
"Go to your broken brothers and sisters.  
Stretch out your hands  
on their pain-ridden bodies.

Give My healing Love  
to all that you meet.  
Be My hands and feet,  
that can, like the Shepherd  
gather again the scattered sheep  
and bring them to My Father.”

Broken but healed,  
I step out in faith  
to be a broken healer  
to a broken world.

May Father Maloney’s poetry (meditation) be unto your healing of all your body, soul, and spirit relationships.

*Father John Michael Zboyovski*