

Trinity Season
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I'm writing just after Trinity Sunday and hasn't the weather been absolutely glorious! I am lucky to be spending a few days on holiday in Llanynis with my husband, Darren and Gideon our Dachshund. We are staying at 'Tawelfa' (*in English, 'a place of calm'*) and it really is. It's so incredibly peaceful here; right on the edge of the river Lrfon; surrounded by trees and such varied, colourful and singing birdlife. It's beautiful and we're already feeling more at one with ourselves, each other and with nature; significantly more rested and connected.

We've both needed the break to be honest, as I'm sure many of you have too. Darren works for Apple and pre-covid would have been away from home in London for half the week interacting with folk in the stores he manages in London and the South. So his world has really shrunk in the last twelve months as he's been forced to operate remotely from home. Feelings of disconnection and isolation have been difficult to work through as has the inability to separate 'home' from 'work'. So it's been good to come away and shift to a whole different basis of perception (helped by a few glasses of wine and several trips to the local farmer's market).

I'm reading a book whilst away: *The Wisdom Jesus* by Cynthia Bourgeault. It's a book that speaks into the difficulties of disconnection and isolation that I've just mentioned and it too recommends a whole shift in perception. Bourgeault suggests that "we human beings come into existence with a certain operating system already installed in us". Married to someone whose life is Apple, we often have discussions about operating systems and Darren is always reminding me to install the latest iOS upgrades. What Bourgeault argues is that our pre-installed operating system is a very rudimentary binary "either/or" one; what she calls an "egoic operating system". This system makes sense of the world by carving it up into right/wrong, subject/object, in/out, or as the Sesame Street jingle put it: "One of these things is not like the other".

So this binary operating system thinks in terms of "good and bad, right and wrong, before and after, up and down". Crucially it's a system where the ego becomes the master of all experience, but the problem with this operating system is:

"most people get stuck in it and rely on the egoic operating system to create a sense of identity. We walk through our lives perceiving, reacting to, and attempting to negotiate the world "out there." It's like being lost in a mirage. A system based in duality can't possibly perceive oneness; it can't create anything beyond itself—only more duality and more trouble".

It's time for an upgrade, she says! and like Apple's iOS operating system, the Creator's upgrade is feely available to us because we all "come into this life with another untapped operating system, and we can learn to steer by it, understand through it, and ultimately discover our deepest sense of identity within it".

This other operating system Bourgeault says is "of the heart" which, unlike the mind, has a very different way of perceiving. So rather than dividing and conquering, the "heart" perceives by means of unity and harmony. It's a way of perceiving that she sees Jesus trying to push, tease, shock and wheedle us into seeing through his many parables and deep wisdom. Take the notoriously challenging parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-15). That's a parable that most of us feel defies all logic and common sense: "It's not fair!", we cry, when the

labourers hired in the last hour get paid the same as those who have worked the entire day! But Bourgeault argues it's only unfair because we use our egoic operating system to make sense of the owner's action. It's precisely because we see the world in terms of more/less, better/worse, first/last that we regard the labourers as rewarded unjustly. The binary mind always perceives through a sense of "scarcity and keeps track of the score through comparison and contrast". So the only way to "crack" this parable, she says, is by a full re-programme and upgrade:

"shifting your perspective so that you see the glass is half full rather than half empty. When you approach the story from the perspective of fullness, you see that there's enough for everybody that the good of everyone has been tended, and that all along it had never been a question of competition, but an invitation to participation and exchange. But that kind of seeing is only accessible within the other operating system. The non-dual knowingness of the heart".

Perhaps that's why God is revealed to us as Trinity. God chose not to come in binary form - as a pair - such that the Trinity holds out a possibility beyond our broken, binary relationships, inviting us into the sharing-and-interdependence of the God who is a unity of Three-in-One. To perceive things through the eyes of the Trinity might enable us to see that reality is more beautiful and considerably more connected than the simplicity that comes from saying I am right, therefore you must be wrong. No real good comes from seeing the world in such stark and binary opposites-only comparison and division - so it is that God comes to us in three and invites us to join in the dance of his three-ness. The 13th Century mystic Meister Eckart captured this well when he said:

Do you want to know what happens
at the heart of the Trinity?

I'll tell you.

At the heart of the Trinity the Father first laughs
and gives birth to the son.

The son laughs back and gives birth to the spirit.

Then the whole Holy Trinity laughs
giving birth to you and to me.



How beautiful is that. The thought that we were conceived in the laughter of God and that out of God's three-ness, we were each born. We're asked to move beyond the binary appearance that God is "over there"—far above us, separate and beyond us, and see how God's transforming love comes to us and bridges with our very being. Our heart already occupies the very centre of God's self, such that our life has the capacity to be lived as an expression of simple gratitude. Robert Browning put it like this:

There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where truth abides in fullness...and to know
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without.

I'm about to begin chapter four of The Wisdom of Jesus where Bourgeault explores what this new perspective might entail in terms of prayer. But a glass of wine first. Happy holidays.

As ever,

Gareth