

Scripture for September 7, 2008

Reflection from John Surette, SJ

Bearing the Beams of Cosmic Love

In our second reading this morning from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans we have these words: “Love does no evil to the neighbor.” (Rom 13:10)

“Love does no evil to the neighbor.” What is implied and unstated here is that a relationship exists between me and my neighbor. So, love does no evil to the neighbor with whom I am in relationship.

Let us begin our meditation on love and relationship by first considering it in its cosmic dimension and then looking at it in its human dimension, a dimension that is part of the cosmic dimension.

Love is central to God’s Universe. It is the mutual attraction that undergirds everything. There is an energy of attraction, an energy for relationship, that pulsates at the heart of the Universe. Everything in nature is in relationship...everything: electrons, protons, atoms, galaxies, stars, mountains, lakes, trees, plants, animals, and, of course, we humans. Nothing in God’s Universe stands alone as an



island. In fact, nothing can stand apart from everything else and be authentically itself. In God’s Universe, to be is to be in relationship.

If we were present at the beginning of the Universe – at what our scientists call the “Big Bang” - we would find a message there that

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reads: “In the beginning is relationship.” What makes the Universe work is that everything and everyone is in relationship.

This cosmic energy for relationship/for love finds its most elemental and comprehensive expression in the force of gravity, whereby every being in the Universe attracts and is attracted to every other being in the Universe.

This cosmic energy for relationship/for love finds a deeper expression in our human capacity for love/for relationship. Whether we are considering gravity or human love we are talking about the same energy of attraction.

And so we can say, we must say, that we are in relationship with everything and everyone that exists. No one I pray for is separate from me, nor is the Planet whose transformation about which I am concerned. Everything and everyone now becomes the neighbor. Everything: the air, the water, the soil, and all the other-than-human creatures. Everyone: spouses, friends, family members, professional associates, members of other religions, members of other cultures, and even those who make themselves my enemy and those whom I make my enemy.

Love/relationship is glorious and satisfying. It is truly life’s bottom line. It truly is what makes the world go around. It is also quite demanding, perhaps more demanding than anything thing else in life. All of our relationships – and there are so many of them now that we know that everything and everyone in the Universe is our neighbor – all of our relationships demand a price of us. Our relationships/our loves are exciting, challenging, and painful. It is the nature of love to be all three of these things.

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I am reminded of some words from that song “The Rose” sung by Bette Midler: “Some say love it is a river that drowns the tender reed; some say love it is a razor that makes your heart to bleed...”

Yes, relationship/love is exciting, challenging, and painful. Put these three together and they form an impressive package, a package worth living for and worth dying for. Because of the painful element, we can even call relationship/love a cross that we must carry, a cross worth living for and a cross worth dying for.

Finally, I am reminded of those lines by poet William Blake: “...we are put on earth for a little space, that we may learn to bear the beams of love.”

Yes, love/relationship is central to the entire Universe. It spreads out and embraces everything and everyone one that exists. “It is not primarily something we make or do, but something we are. We do not define it so much as it defines us. Before it is ever manifest as an activity or behavior within us, love is that impulse, motivation, or energy that links us to the whole web of life” (Sam Keen).

Ultimately, God is relationship; God is Love!

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