

3. THE DIVINE DYNAMIC: BEING AND BECOMING

In an evolutionary spirituality, we need to attend to these two dimensions of **Being** and **Becoming**. In this way we bring forward St. Mary Euphrasia's challenge to us to be and become like the Good Shepherd.

It is interesting to note the number of times in her conferences that St. Mary Euphrasia appeals to us to live a contemplative life... "I implore you dear daughters to apply yourself to the hidden life in God.... Try to form yourself in the spirit of the Institute and live an interior life... Lead a holy interior life... I desire that all here should be saints because you are on the mountain... Accustom yourselves to live an interior life".

The age old question that spiritual seekers have asked over time is: "Who am I and why am I here? Responses to these questions can be seen in two different images. One comes from a picture of the 12th century mystic Hildegard of Bingen, a Benedictine nun and doctor of the church. She wrote about her vision of a fiery light abiding in the centre of her being. That fiery light is God. A 21st century image of the birth of the universe also gives witness to the light of God, exploding forth in ecstatic unfolding. The difference between the images is the direction of the light; in one the light is within and in the other the light is moving out: two names for God.

God is the timeless void at the centre of the self. God is the *Ground of our Being* from which everything arises and to which everything returns. God is the evolutionary impulse, the relational creative force that gave birth to the universe.

Now the mystical life opens up more in *Being and Becoming*.

It is an evolution of our consciousness. In many spiritual traditions the goal of the spiritual life was to go back to the *Ground of our Being*. In our time, we have this too, but, we know we have to be evolving and bringing the world forward in love.

Serious saints and seekers on the path to God have asked the question "Who am I and why am I here?"

Who am I? If you ask the question to find the answer you have to take a journey to the deepest part of yourself that will lead you all the way back to before the universe was born, when there was no space and time. To go back before the beginning, you need to go so deeply into yourself that you lose awareness of your body, the room, the earth and you discover like Teresa and Hildegard, that the deepest part is the *Ground of Being* in yourself. You cannot go deeper than that. How do you get there? Through meditation, you find God abiding at the deepest part of yourself ... this is why St. Mary Euphrasia kept saying "lead an interior life". Because she wanted us to know that God is at the deepest part of ourselves. Our activism in the world has to come out of that ground of our depths. One of the reasons we meditate every day is to know who we are at the depth of ourselves, because this is the place of freedom. St. Mary Euphrasia states: "The more ardent the zeal of an apostolic sister is the more she will pray". Her challenge to us was to live an interior life and "*Becoming*" was her evolutionary zeal.

Three ways to access the *Ground of Being*:

- Meditation;
- When God breaks in and reveals Godself to you;
- Be in the presence of someone who lives from that place. You experience a lightness of being, spaciousness, and positivity and often you experience a sense of wanting to become more of who you are in the presence of that person.

It is possible to live in religious life without ever touching the *Ground of our Being* or ever being aware that it exists. Or perhaps we feel we are not worthy of it, or we are more concerned about activity in the world. There can also be a spiritual laziness, like a sluggish spirit. St. Mary Euphrasia warned against this when she spoke of tepidity.

In the process of being faithful to what she experienced at the *Ground of her Being*, Hildegard of Bingen felt that: "God within wants me to write so that other people can know God." However she was deemed to be a blasphemer by the church authorities of the 12th century "because they said not even the prophets knew God like this and how could you a woman think that you could have an experience like this?"

We have to catch up because so many centuries have passed when so many women did not take up a leadership role in the spiritual life. We are mediocre in exploring this part of ourselves. No wonder, given that for many centuries we were given a message depreciating women. We need to break out of structures within us of which we may not even be aware.

Guided Meditation:

Review two dimensions of God: *Ground of Being*,... God before time, before the universe began. *Ground of being* is eternal, infinite and full.

Imagine that you were God before the universe began. If you were God before the universe began you would be in perfect harmony, in a state of perfect peace and bliss. You have not created anything yet. It is just perfect peace. Now imagine your abiding eternal bliss. This is not a problem because time has not yet begun. For some reason out of this perfect contentment, God chose to create the cosmos. We are talking in an imaginary way. We imagine we are God in perfect and eternal bliss. Even though we are so perfectly content, we start to have a feeling that even in this perfection there is something more that is possible. So God does something outrageous and amazing out of this place of freedom, out of nothing, God creates the universe. Who am I? I am here to help God create the world, being and becoming.

Then you are invited to have an experience together of the *Ground of our Being*. All the mystics and teachers have told us to go to that place in the self where nothing has happened yet in the eternal full place where all are one. Sit upright and close your eyes.

Take 20 minutes to gather in meditation.

Begin by taking a few breaths in and out.

Begin by imagining the words of Jesus "Come let us cross over to the other side..."

Let us cross into the deepest part of ourselves.
Imagine Jesus there with the boat and he invites you in.
Picture yourself getting into the boat and sitting in the seat and take a moment to relax in the boat.
Remember to keep the position of being relaxed in this mediation.
Even though you are relaxed remain very alert.
Now imagine Jesus pushing you away from the shore and you begin to row the boat.
And no matter what you experience let everything be as it is. If the sun is too hot just notice that. If a bug flies around you head, notice it, but you don't get involved in thought or feeling. Let everything be as it is.

If you hear a voice that says, I do not know how to mediate. Let it be as it is.
If you feel afraid of going deeper.. Let it be. You do not get involved with thoughts and feelings. Let everything be as it is.

Now you imagine you get to the middle of the lake and you jump overboard and you dive deep and you go deeper and deeper and deeper. You may imagine as you go deeper your body falls away, you let go of your body and the place you are in and time. Now allow yourself to go deeper. And for a few moments we will let go together and fall deeper and deeper into the *Ground of Being*.

Now slowly begin to come back, imagine yourself swimming back up through the deep water until you reach that boat and get back in that boat. Remember to sit in that seat relaxed in a position of freedom, having no relation to thoughts or feelings; just letting things be as they. When you are ready begin coming back to the shore. And when you are ready get out of the boat put your feet on the ground and open your eyes. When you are ready and still in this space of freshness turn to someone close to you and share what this experience is like for you.