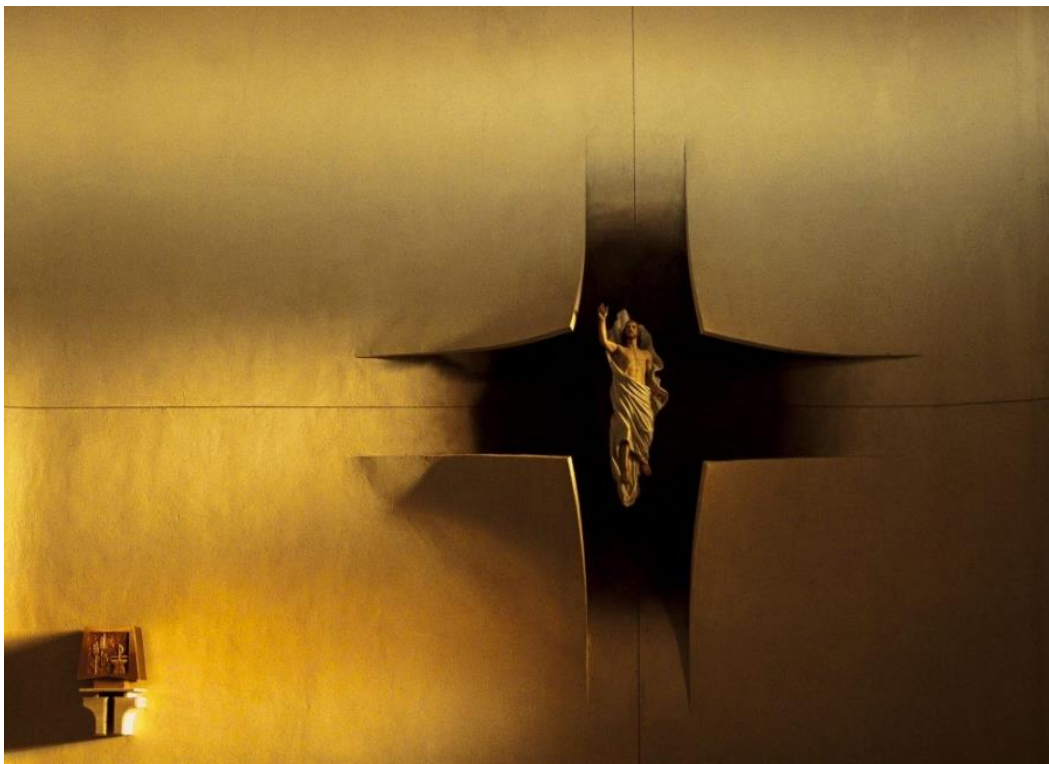




THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Formation in the Christian Contemplative Life

86: The Divine Banquet and Dance, Part 2 (cont.)



Elpopphoto

*I implore you to offer yourselves...to God...
Do not conform yourselves to this age
but be transformed by the renewal
of your minds.
- Romans 12:1-2*

Contemplative prayer is...basically a growth of faith that we received in Baptism or have accessed prior to that...in which the presence of God believed to be within us just goes on increasing...at ever deepening levels [of awareness] ... We should, it seems to me, begin with the doctrine of the Divine Indwelling. This is the doctrine that says that the Trinity, the Divine Trinity: Father Son and Holy Spirit...is present in us all the time – morning, noon and night – and present everywhere else in the universe in virtue of the fact that other things exist. Wherever anything is, God who is 'is-ness' must be present.

...Everybody needs God. It's not a question of being worthy or not. The issue is...will you come in and sit down with the One who joins us? And it's that joint endeavor – that joint sharing of the human condition with its joys and sorrows, its ordinariness, its profane character, its endless waiting, its deprivations – and not just our suffering, if we experience that, but rather the experience of the prayer is gradually educating us in what contemplative prayer really is: an education in undeserved mercy.

...And so, rather than feeling unworthy of God, the right disposition for the contemplative is to recognize that God is totally joined to us in our difficulties and that the difficulties don't reflect God's displeasure but only the desire...to invite us beyond our own healing process to...the whole human family; because the whole human family is the object of God's desire for transformation and it's into this project that he invites us the farther we go into the spiritual journey and the more intimate the dance becomes. Contemplative prayer, then, is really a profound, and the profoundest, perhaps, participation in Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection.

— Thomas Keating, from the Session 85 video

Now we turn to Fr. Thomas' latest work and listen to how he relates the Divine Indwelling to contemporary expressions of non-dual consciousness and emptiness and their implications for ordinary life.

To Practice

- View the video excerpt "Christian Non-Duality and Unity Consciousness" from the DVD series: *That We May Be One* which is about 10 minutes in length.

- In this session we are called to take in: *God is in all and all is in God*. How have you been called to trust this?

Notes and Reflections: