



THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Formation in the Christian Contemplative Life

91: What is Divine Therapy? Part 1



Marguerite Laing, *Ground of Being II*

*...What will separate us from the love of Christ?
Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine,
or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?
...No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly
through [God] who loved us.
For I am convinced that neither death,
nor life, nor angels, nor principalities,
nor present things, nor future things,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor any other creature will be able to separate us
from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- Romans 8:35, 37-39

You might remember in the early sessions of this program we asked the questions, "Who is God?" and "Who are You?" As we near the end of our program, we revisit these two questions and notice how our answers may have changed as we have changed. We learned at the beginning of Part 5 that God doesn't just show love, but God *is* love. If we believe that we are moving along this journey awakening to divine union, that also means we *are* love.

When we receive the divine therapy, it is as if we are undergoing a course of treatment for an ailment that we call the human condition. In *Manifesting God* Fr. Thomas says, "The purpose of the divine therapy is to enable us to become who we are. We may be afraid of being who we are. Jesus addresses this situation in these words: 'If You try to save your life (that is, your false self), you will bring yourself to ruin.' The false self has no future."

"The second half of the saying is 'One who brings himself to nought for me discovers who he is' (Matthew 10:39). The true self is limitless in its spiritual capacity. To bring oneself to no-thing, that is, to no particular thing, is to let go of over-identification with one's body, feelings, thoughts, and one's inmost self, as well as friends, relatives, property, and roles. It also means moderating our exaggerated desires for the gratification of our emotional programs for happiness. The divine therapy is designed to enable us to negotiate this healing process according to genetic and temperamental factors, our personality and the circumstances of our lives. An enormous Intelligence is guiding us through this process with a love that is unconditional and determined to bring about this healing, whatever the cost to Itself."

This is sometimes a hard lesson to hear, but as Fr. Thomas neared the end of his life, he often talked about the dying process and tells us not to worry too much. If we are unable to accept the personal diminishment that Jesus recommends in Matthew 10:39, we will be transformed in the dying process. This "enormous Intelligence" that is guiding us with so much love and determination helps us to overcome our fear and to trust in the power of grace. The fact that we are on this spiritual journey and intentionally deepening our relationship with God provides us with the opportunity to experience transformation in this life, to become who we really are.

A Meditation

I have come to believe that the time of dying effects a transformation from perceived tragedy to experienced grace. Beyond that, I think this transformation is a universal process. Although relatively unexamined, the Nearing Death Experience has profound implications. Dying offers the possibility of entering the radiance, the vastness, of our Essential Nature, at least for a few precious moments...

The Nearing Death Experience implies a natural and conscious remerging with the Ground of Being from which we have all once unconsciously emerged. A transformation occurs from the point of terror at the contemplation of the loss of our separate, personal self to a merging into the deep, nurturing, ineffable experience of Unity.

- Kathleen Dowling Singh, *The Grace in Dying: A Message of Hope, Comfort, and Spiritual Transformation*

To Practice

- View the video excerpt "What is the Divine Therapy? Part 1" which is about 30 minutes in length.

- Reflect on what Kathleen Dowling Singh says, that at birth we unconsciously emerged from the Ground of Being, and that through transformation we merge into the deep, nurturing, ineffable experience of Unity. Notice how you feel as you reflect on this beautiful image.

Resources for Further Study:

You may wish to read Chapter 12, "What is the Divine Therapy?" from *Manifesting God*.

Notes and Reflections: