



# THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Formation in the Christian Contemplative Life

## 22: Pre-Rational Energy Centers, Part 1-Continued



Image: courtesy of Ron Barnett

*Therefore, I prayed, and prudence was given to me;  
I pleaded and the spirit of Wisdom came to me.  
... Sincerely I learned about her,  
and ungrudgingly do I share --  
her riches I do not hide away.  
For she is an unfailing treasure;  
those who gain this treasure win the  
friendship of God  
being commended by the gifts  
that come  
from her discipline.  
- Wisdom 7:7, 13-14*

"When John says, 'The Word became Flesh,' it's the incredible affirmation that God took upon himself, not just the ideal human nature, but human nature in its flesh; that is, in its actual condition of privation, misery, sin, death -- taking the whole thing upon himself -- that means Jesus must have experienced the temptation to get fixated at some level of his human growth. ... the human condition in its depth, in its weakness, in its temptation. ...

"What we're confronted with when we begin the spiritual journey ... is the experience of the interior desert ... and the purification that comes through temptation resisted. So, anybody who is ... trying to dismantle the false-self system, manifested in these emotional programs for happiness, is in the desert, and is in union with Christ; or, rather, Christ is in union with them, in virtue of the solidarity of the human family and his taking it totally to himself in his Incarnation. ...

"Later, when Jesus was preaching ... he laid out his idea of happiness. The Beatitudes simply mean: 'Oh, how happy you would be, if ...' That's what 'beatitude' really means. ... In other words, true happiness is ... the joy and freedom of trusting in God to protect [us], to provide for [us], to nurture [us]. ...

"The Gospel, then, is a message that challenges our programs for happiness head on and invites us to change them. If we hear that message and follow it, this is represented as wisdom. If we don't, then we have to rely on the tragedies of life to turn us around and finally convince us ... Why wait until you have to be clobbered by life before getting this message?"

- Thomas Keating, excerpts from the video "Pre-Rational Energy Centers, Part 1"

## **Meditations**

"*Know thyself*: and this refers to the mirror. ... What is this mirror, then, if not the Divine Spirit? When a man looks in it and sees himself in it, he turns away from all that is called 'gods and demons.' He attaches himself to a process of purification, through the instrument of the mirror, which becomes the Holy Spirit .... By means of the mirror he eventually sees God who is in him, by the intermediation of the Holy Spirit."

- Maurice Nicoll, *The Mark*

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"You have to trust your inner life, your innermost self ... rather than the empirical ego or the external self, the social self. This means that you live as you stand naked before God ... listen from the heart ... united to God and one another."

- Brother Patrick Hart, secretary to Thomas Merton, commenting on Merton's legacy in an interview with Sister Mary Margaret Funk, OSB, 2004

## **To Practice**

- Reflect: The Beatitudes are wisdom sayings that express dispositions for each level of consciousness to wisdom. Continue to spend some time with them as they are outlined in the Session 21 narrative or on the one that spoke to you upon first reading. Notice any feeling, thought or prayer that rises up from your heart. We will return to the Beatitudes again in our journey.

**Resources for Further Study:**

You may wish to read Chapters 18 and 19 in *Invitation to Love* (20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition), Chapters 17 and 18 in earlier editions.

**Notes and Reflections:**