



## The Search for an Interior Life

We live in a time when life often seems to be lived at a very fast pace, but also a time when we often feel we are only living life at the surface and that there is a lack of depth to many of the things we do, including, sometimes, our faith. At the same time we see the rise of various new spiritualities or practices that suggest that many people are seeking something different, something deeper. The increasing popularity and, indeed, need for yoga, meditation and mindfulness practices provide evidence of this if it were needed.

One of the characteristics of all of these practices is that they promote a search within the self, rather than in another more transcendental world. This leads to some debate but it is also true that many Christians have engaged in one way or another with these practices and found them helpful. Thomas Merton springs to mind but there have been many more in more recent times. What they are all seeking, it seems, is the nourishment of our *interior life*.

The French Christian essayist and poet Christian Bobin (b. 1951) describes the interior life in the following terms: 'The interior life is everything that we become conscious of when we slowly disengage our attention from the distractions of exterior life, the hustle and bustle of the quotidian. This is when we come to understand that we have a body, that we breathe, that we have sensations that run through us, both agreeable and disagreeable, that we have emotions and thoughts that inhabit us.'

The interior life is when all of this comes together, what is outside us and what is within us, because what is inside is not a bubble cut off from what is outside. The border between the two, if it exists, is porous.

The interior life goes on with very little noise. It is made up of everything that does not immediately draw our attention, very often things that happen in secret and in silence and to which we need to be attentive in order to distinguish what is *urgent* from what is *important*. The *urgent* is what tugs at our sleeve demanding attention and chastise us if it is not satisfied: work, daily chores, social commitments, and the 'stuff' of everyday life. These are usually our priorities. The result, however, can often be that we fail to be attentive to what is *important*, things which require time, thought and discernment: a walk in nature, meeting the people we love, meditation, doing those things that really matter.

In this, we very often overlook what is essential in life, and over time this deepens and we end up being consumed by what appears to be *urgent* at the expense of what is really *important*. This may remain the case until perhaps we are confronted with an illness, an accident, or a crisis of some kind that brings things into perspective. It is at such times that our interior life comes to help us, and perhaps even to save us by revealing to us what we really are and what really matters in life. The interior life is that part of our spirit that lives deep within, the reasons we are alive and in the *here and now*.

The interior life is that part of our spirit that lies deep within us, deep but not impenetrable. There are many ways of growing in awareness of this essential part of ourselves. Some of these require some effort; introspection, meditation, taking the time for a walk in the wild. Others are born out of those moments of insight, some of which may be upsetting such as the death of somebody close to us, other simple and straightforward, such as having a glass of wine or a cup of tea. The interior life in the end is nourished by our being attentive to those inner promptings, the murmurs of our soul, 'the voice in the evening breeze.' (Gen. 3:8).

If we take our time, our happiness and our sufferings, our joys and our moments of anger, will tell us much more about ourselves and what 'makes us tick'. The knowledge of our interior life will not make us any more efficient or effective or effective, it will not boost our performance and if this is what we seek we would be better looking elsewhere. It will, however, make us more human. We will feel human even when we don't have the time to stop to think, to breathe, to

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feel, to look, to exist, when we only work, consume, get agitated, when we feel human or like a zombie or a robot.

Bobin writes: 'On entering one's kingdom we need to abandon our references to the exterior life where everything is subject to the foolish demands of efficacy because here it is a question of doing things with others but overlooking the passing of life within oneself.' (Based on a text by Christian Bobin, *A la recherche de la vie intérieure*, Patrice Van Eerse (Ed), Parish: Albin Michel, 2017)

### Thoughts for a Day

When we look into the heart of a flower, we see clouds, sunshine, minerals, time, the earth, and everything else in the cosmos in it. Without clouds, there could be no rain, and there would be no flower. Without time, the flower could not bloom. In fact, the flower is made of entirely non-flower elements; it has no independent, individual existence. When we see the nature of inter-being, barriers between ourselves and others are dissolved, and peace, love, and understanding are possible. Whenever there is understanding, compassion is born.

- *Thich Nhat Hanh* (b. 1926, Vietnam, Zen Master)

The world is full of hundreds of beautiful things we can never possibly have time to discover, and there is no time to be unkind or envious or ungenerous, and no sense in enslaving the mind to the trivialities of the moment. For you can be equal to the greatness of life only by marching with it; not by seeking love but by giving it, nor by seeking to be understood, but by learning to understand.

- *Vivienne de Watteville* (1900–1957) British travel writer

Your joy is your sorrow unmasked. And the selfsame well from which your laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears. And how else can it be? The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain....When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy. - *Kahlil Gibran* (1883-1931)

### Masses and Confession

**Sundays:** Vigil, 6pm (Saturday), 9.30am, 11am, 5pm

-**Rosary** daily after 10am mass

**Adoration Blessed Sacrament, Weds 10.30-12.40**

### Church Collections

**W/e 29<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

1<sup>st</sup> Collection: €1,010

Share Collection: €767

Weekday collections: €565

THANK YOU

### In Memoriam

6pm, Elizabeth and John Lynch (Anniversary)

11am, Cathal and Kathleen McIvor



### WMOF 2018 Hospitality Evening at St Mary's

As parishioners will know, our parish is among sixteen Dublin parishes who have been asked to welcome visitors to the **WMOF2018**. We to host a *fáilte Isteach* evening event on **Friday 24 August at 7.30pm**. This will include a short prayer service around the WMOF icon, a short cultural programme and refreshments.

An amazing 37,000 people have signed in for the Pastoral Congress of the WMOF at the RDS. The visitors attending the Haddington Road event will be mostly from the **UK, Australia and New Zealand**. We still have no idea how many will accept our invitation but we need to be prepared.

**Catering arrangements** have been put in place but we will be counting on the hospitality and generosity of parishioners to supply wines, some Irish treats and hospitality. We would be very grateful if parishioners could already begin to drop in either bottle of wine or vouchers that we might use for purchases for the event. On the day or the day before we would also be very grateful for any 'Irish treats' (scones, tarts, cakes) that people might be able to make and donate.

We would like to make this a very nice Dublin/Irish evening with a real sense of 'I welcome' for those who have come to us for this important Church as Family event. This will be a great opportunity for all of us to experience the universality of the Church and the fact that we all belong to this one family.



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