

Magdalen Community at Rothko Chapel

Sunday, August 10, 2006, 10:00 a.m.

The Magdalen Community is a connective community seeking conversation and dialogue with other spiritualities and religious traditions.

Opening Meditation

Does the soul have a body, or the body a soul?

*---Charles Hartshorne, from *Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method**

Two Voices for Meditation

Every existence in nature, every existence in the human world, every cultural work that we create, is something which was given, or is being given to us, relatively speaking. But as everything is originally one, we are, in actuality, giving out everything. Moment after moment we are creating something, and this is the joy of our life. But this "I" which is creating and always giving something is not the "small I"; it is the "big I." Even though you do not realize the oneness of this "big I" with everything, when you give something you feel good, because at that time you feel at one with what you are giving. This is why it feels better to give than to take.

*---Shunryu Suzuki, from *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind**

The holiness of God consists, I dare to say, not in a strange reconciliation of justice and mercy, each somehow an ultimate principle of value, but in the single aim at the one primary good, which is that the creatures should enjoy rich harmonies of living, and pour this richness into the one ultimate receptacle of all achievement, the life of God.

*---Charles Hartshorne, from *The Divine Relativity**

Readings and Call to Conversation

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, "To an unknown god." What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to

inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we too are his offspring.”

---Acts of the Apostles 17:22-28

God is similarly both eternal and temporal in all-surpassing ways; God alone has an eternal individuality, meaning unborn and undying, and God alone has enjoyed the entire past and will enjoy all the future. He-She is both physical and spiritual, and the divine body . . . is all-surpassing and all-inclusive of the creaturely bodies, which are to God as cells to a supercellular organism. His-Her spirit embraces all the psychical there is with all-surpassing, unstinted love.

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If you or I had made different decisions, God would have enjoyed (or suffered) these other decisions. Anything that could be actual God could divinely have, but what God actually has depends partly on creaturely decisions. This is the social structure of existence. The primacy of love means that there is no possible value that any being could have simply in and by itself, or simply by its own decision.

---Charles Hartshorne, from *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes*

According to Christianity, every existence in nature is something which was created for or given to us by God. That is the perfect idea of giving. But if you think that God created man, and that you are somehow separate from God, you are liable to think that you have the ability to create something separate, something not given by Him . . . we soon forget about God.

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When we sit in the cross-legged posture, we resume our fundamental activity of creation. There are perhaps three kinds of creation. The first is to be aware of ourselves after we finish zazen. When we sit we are nothing, we do not even realize what we are; we just sit. But when we stand up, we are there! That is the first step in creation. When you are there, everything else is there; everything is created all at once. When we emerge from nothing, when everything emerges from nothing, we see it all as a fresh new creation . . . The second kind of creation is when you act, or produce or prepare something like food or tea. The third kind is to create something within yourself, such as education, or culture, or art, or some system for our society. So there are three kinds of creation. But if you forget the first, the most important one, the other two will be like children who have lost their parents; their creation will mean nothing.

---Shunryu Suzuki, from *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*

The central question of religion cannot be, "What about heaven and hell?" but must be, "What about God, cosmic mind and love, exalted in principle above all else, the only indestructible, all inclusive, yet individual, being?"

The belief that God does not simply and completely make things, but brings it about that they partly make themselves and one another, does not mean that the divine creating is just one more case of creating. In principle, the divine action has unrivaled superiority. Most obviously it is divine decision which determines the form of the statistical or approximate cosmic orderliness, leaving the details for the creatures to settle. . . Only God can be guaranteed to make ideally wise use of that we have been.

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The supernatural is real; but the supernatural is God, not humanity. In the supernatural reality of God, unbounded in space, unborn and undying, the bounded, fragmentary reality of each of us is imperishably included, a definite quantum in the Life which is all-in-all, or in which "we live and move and have our being."

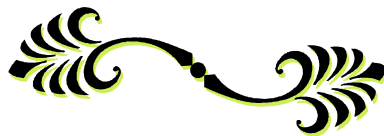
---Charles Hartshorne, from *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes*

A Closing in Silence from the Gospel of Mary

"I go now into Silence."

Having said this, Mary became silent,
for it was in silence that the Teacher spoke to her.

As an expression of appreciation to The Rothko Chapel for use of this sacred space,
your love offering in the box marked "Magdalen Community"
will be gratefully received.



For more information about the Magdalen Community, please contact Bridgitt Ayers,
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