

Sixth Talk

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP

Brothers, when I was in Melbourne recently and mentioned that John of the Cross had been orphaned, one of the Brothers there could not get past that. It brought up memories for him because he himself had lost both his parents at an early age. He stayed with that while the rest of us were moving on. I mention that incident to you because God is speaking to each one of us individually. So feel comfortable to stay with God where you think God is in your own journey. Try to stay more at the level of what you are feeling than at the level of ideas.

I mentioned in my last talk that being born from above would involve looking afresh at our world. Joan Chichester speaks about contemplation as *looking at our world through God's eyes*. She calls contemplation "*the ability to see through, to see into, to see despite, to see without blindness. It is the ability to see a whole world rather than a partial one*". This is the invitation of this larger God - to see the big picture. When the filter through which we see the world brings us to openness and compassion for that world, in creation as re-created and humans becoming human again, this filter, this ability to see through, despite, without blindness, will open us and give us a compassionate feeling for our world. This compassionate feeling will help in its re-creation, because it will give us humility in the face of that world. It will give us a vulnerability to the impact of that world. It will help us to be non-violent in dealing with that world and it will make us respect the otherness of that world, which God gives us. We become as big or as small as the object of our love.

What are the objects of my love? What are my interests? What are God's interests? My vows free me to become involved with God's interests. The world is as big or as small as you make it. Our vows free us to make this world huge and our interests huge. I would like you, Brothers, to take our Constitutions and in reading them try to see a large picture, a large canvas. I would like you to circle words that strike you. In the light of what we have been doing, in the light of this God who loves us crazily, the God who is drawing us and trying to tear apart all obstacles in between us to reach us and shake us. He is saying to us in the words of a holy man, "Wake up! Live! Why when I have given you this beautiful world have you fallen asleep in a prison cell of all places? It takes a mystic to come up with an image like that. So stay with that bit. Remember that Nicodemus came

to Jesus by night. He did not want to move away from the dominant image, the dominant culture. He was still stuck in human respect. We are excluded not by where we live but by our refusal to go further. So I invite you to have a look at your life and to spend this time in looking at that call. Then you may answer the following questions for yourself:

How has my living of the call inherent in my vows enabled me to love, enlarged my horizons?

What do my vows mean to me?

How has poverty helped me to enlarge my horizons?

How has celibacy caused me to love more deeply?

Celibacy is never barrenness. It is creativity.

In my obedience, am I seeking to listen for God?

How has obedience to God opened my horizons to listen for a larger God?