

Not explaining but experiencing

Beloved person,

During the days of Holy Week, I sometimes imagine how Jesus might have experienced that final period of his life. I then immerse myself in the stories we have been telling one another for so long and picture the scene in my mind. Entering Jerusalem on a donkey, vulnerable, with all those people cheering him along the roadside. In my mind's eye, I see him walking into the temple where the market is in full swing. At what moment was the courageous decision born within him to stand up against the desecrating money changers? I picture him during the Last Supper as he washes the feet of his disciples. Serving, humble. And then the 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do'. And I wonder: what happens inside a person that enables him to live so fully out of love at those crucial moments?

Have there been moments when insights simply came to him, as it were? Might there have been moments when a thought presented itself—perhaps in silence or in prayer—to which he could, or even had to inwardly, say 'yes' to? Where does such a thought actually come from? What is it that then speaks? Does it have a name? And can you feel guided by it?

*How...
does an idea ever come into being?
can such a thought arise?
Where does that moment of clarity,
that insight, actually come from?!*

Perhaps my religious feeling begins precisely there. In a place where we do not know exactly what is happening, but where we do experience that something is at work within us that we do not entirely create ourselves. A thought that arises, an experience that invites, an insight that provides direction, a feeling that says: this is the right thing to do. As if there are moments in our lives when something presents itself that is greater than we ourselves can imagine. You could call it inspiration, or a deeper knowing, or the breath of the spirit, a divine moment, or....

It also helps me to increasingly make more room for those kinds of moments. Not wanting to explain or control everything, but being open to what presents itself and listening to how it makes me feel inside. Perhaps the question of whether you can explain it precisely or find the right words for it is not even that relevant then. It is more important to recognise such moments, make room for them, and let them work in our lives.

I believe that you can practice this too. Not by waiting for such moments to come to you, as it were, but by opening yourself up to them. By being still from time to time. By truly listening to what lives within you. By looking with attention and care at what presents itself in your life. By praying. By taking time to ask yourself what is the right thing to do in a given situation. By remaining true to who you deeply want to be. That is something no one else can do for you. And when a thought then presents itself—almost unnoticed—the questions return. How? Where does it come from? What is speaking?

I hope we never find a definitive answer to it. It is not something to explain, but to experience.

Perhaps that was also how Jesus found his way in the final days of his life. Not because he knew everything in advance, but because he kept listening to what presented itself within him and heeded it. As if he were searching time and again for what was the right thing to do in that moment. Step by step, moment by moment. True to his faith and to what he wanted to stand for. And stories about the consequences of that attitude to life have been passed down for thousands of years, all over the world.

With a warm-hearted greeting, and also those of Sister Nanda Ziere,
gladly your brother, Marten van der Wal



1 Song 'Inspiration' by Mathilde Santing

On Sunday, March 29, the national Palm Sunday meeting will take place at Theater Orpheus in Apeldoorn. We are all very much looking forward to it. During this meeting, we will also remember the sisters and brothers from our communities who have passed away in the past year.