



Spirituality of the Heart in Action

A friend of ours occasionally introduces himself as the one who saved my husband from jumping off a bridge. What's the story behind it? Well, there is not much to tell. First of all, the bridge in Verulam Park where my friend met my hubby is not that tall. And there were definitely no thoughts of self-harm. The gloomy expression on my hubby's face was all down to a long day in the office. So, this story ends well.



From an "intervention" from a complete stranger, this led to a couple of pints of beer in a local pub and many years of friendship.

In London, thousands of people walk around feeling slightly deflated and no one really notices. But here in St. Albans, it's not that unlikely to get a tap on your shoulder and hear "Hey mate, are you alright"? At a recent event, we talked about the simplicity of the Spirituality of the Heart and the simplicity of helping people. We talked about how many good things happen in our community. We also talked about the need to listen to each other and reflect upon what we learn.

Maybe you might have a simple story you would like to share with others? Not a great story that will save the world, but a simple story of someone reaching out, helping others out of the goodness of their heart, quietly and selflessly. The story could be about your co-worker, a carer, a nurse, a volunteer or anyone else. Maybe they visited someone who is lonely, accompanied a frightened person to a court hearing or helped with refreshments at a hospice. If you do, please e-mail us at hearttoheartstalbans@gmail.com.

All stories, (including this one!), will be shared anonymously.

Learn more...

If you would like to learn more about the Spirituality of the Heart, check out our online resources:

www.hearttoheartstalbans.org

Litany to the Sacred Heart

Sacred Heart of Jesus, be my Light, When night never seems to end.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, be my Way, When Crossroads of life become confusing.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, be my Sun, When days become long, dark and dreary.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, be my Guide, When the mysteries of life seem to overwhelm me.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, be my Joy, When sorrow becomes my companion in life's way.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, be my Heart, When I seem to have lost mine and withheld compassion.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, be my Victory, When I am tired of "fighting the good fight" and seem lost.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, be my Life, When my lifeboat falters and death beckons.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, be my Hope, When my heart ceases to see any hope in the future.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, be my Salvation, When all seems lost and futile.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, be my Peace, When my being revolts and I must war against myself.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved. Forever.

Catholic Christians in Search of a Spirituality

In 2003 the Pontifical Council for Culture and for Interreligious Dialogue issued a discussion paper entitled Jesus Christ the bearer of the Water of Life. Cardinal Poupard, president of this Council, wrote in the foreword to this document *“that the success of New Age growth is a response for people’s longing for peace, harmony and reconciliation within themselves, with others and with nature.”* The paper remarked that success of New Age thinking and practice offers the Church a challenge: *“The search which often leads people to New Age is a genuine yearning for a deeper spirituality, for something that will touch their hearts and for a way of making sense of a confusing and often alienating world”* (Water of Life” no. 1.5 see also no 3.3) Quoted by Jim Quillinan, Shaping an Australian Spirituality in Compass, vol. 46, no. 4, 2012,).

In November 2011, the American weekly newspaper ‘National Catholic Reporter’ (NCR) published a survey that offered a portrait of US Catholics in the Second Decade of the 21st Century. One of the conclusions of the survey was that US Catholics “continue to maintain a strong foothold in the Church and to participate regularly in the sacraments”, while the same Catholics easily embrace new spiritual resources. In the same issue of the NCR, in an article entitled “Old and New Spiritual Resources”, Michelle Dillon concludes that *“large numbers of Catholics say that they believe in various aspects of New Age Spirituality. Forty two percent believe that there is spiritual energy located in physical things such as mountains, trees or crystals; over one third (37 percent) believes in reincarnation...”*

Linda Woodhead, a professor in the Department of Politics, Religion and Religion at Lancaster University in England, notes that in the UK, belief in a « personal God » roughly halved between 1961 and 2000 – from 57 per cent of the British population to 26 percent, while over the same period, belief in a “spirit of life force” doubled – from 22 percent in 1961 to 44 per cent in 2000.



In many parts of the world, Catholics try to feed their spiritual hunger by searching for resources, different from Sunday worship. It seems that their spiritual appetite is not appeased only by regularly attending Mass and listening to sermons. They are in search of something more. Without being aware of it, they are in need of food for their hearts. It might be that they go shopping in a market which supplies all kinds of ‘spiritualities’. However, because of the great variety of spiritualities on offer, – the World Wide Web under “Christian Spirituality” yields millions of sites – they might find it difficult to make the right choice. So, not surprisingly, some of them might be tempted to embrace certain spiritual views and convictions that in our Christian view do not lead toward spiritual fulfilment, and finally will not be able to appease spiritual hunger.

Many, even committed Catholics, are not aware of the existence of life-giving spiritual resources in our own Christian tradition. Some people assume that these resources are only accessible to men and women in religious life, who spend many hours in prayer and meditation. They are not aware of the fact that most Christian spiritualities, including those in the Catholic tradition, are at the service of everyone, even of people with a busy daily schedule. People longing for a deeper spiritual life will be enriched by these spiritualities. A condition is that they should feel touched and attracted by the path shown by great men and women in the history of Christianity, more specifically also in the Catholic Church. (Fr. Hans Kwakman MSC)

A Reflective Moment

**“Human Development must include not just material growth
but also spiritual growth, since the human person is
a “unity of body and soul”, born of God’s creative love and destined for eternal life.
We human beings develop when we grow in the spirit,
when we begin to know ourselves and the truths that God has implanted deep within,
when we enter into dialogue with ourselves and our Creator.”
(Liberal translation of Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate, no. 76)**