

ST CANICES CATHOLIC CHURCH

LENT DISCUSSION GROUP SUNDAY 3 MARCH 2013

FAITH AND SPIRITUALITY

1. We begin with a prayer "Take and Receive" (St Ignatius)
2. Terminology:
  - (a) Faith
  - (b) Spirituality
  - (c) Ignatian spirituality
  - (d) Split spirituality
3. Scripture Hebrews 4:1-14 and James 2:14-26
4. "On Another's Sorrow" (a poem by William Blake)
5. An extract from "Silence" (a novel by Shusako Endo)
6. Some issues to discuss and consider:
  - (a) What is faith as opposed to spirituality?
  - (b) Are they independent or interdependent?
  - (c) Is simply having faith or having spirituality enough in itself?
  - (d) What is Ignatian spirituality? Split spirituality?
  - (e) What are the implications of faith and spirituality for Lent?

## FAITH

In the Old Testament the Hebrew (pistes, fides) means essentially "steadfastness": and comes to mean faithfulness whether of God towards man or of man towards God. As signifying man's attitude towards God it means truthfulness. In the new Testament "believe" and "belief" come to the fore. In Romans 14:23 it has the meaning of conscience. ("all that is not faith is sin"), but Paul repeatedly uses it in the sense of "belief".

Trust in God is faith, faith is belief, belief may mean creed, but creed is not equivalent to trust in God (Hibbert Journal 1907).

Non Catholic writers..... fail to realise that faith must result in a body of dogmatic beliefs .....the surrender of Christ into a philosophical Christology Objectively faith stands for the sum of truths revealed by God in scripture and tradition which the church presents to us in a brief form in her creeds. Subjectively faith stands for the habit or virtue by which we assent to those truths. (Catholic Encyclopedia).

Some unbelievers of faith have argued that faith is opposed to reason. In contrast some believers of faith argue that the proper domain of faith concerns questions which cannot be settled by evidence. (Wikipedia)

The twofold order of knowledge is firstly, that there is natural reason (truth attainable by reason) and secondly, there is Divine faith (mysteries hidden by God but which we believe. The assent of the intellect to a truth which is beyond comprehension, but which it accepts under the influence of the will moved by grace.

Faith shown by works has ever been the doctrine of the Catholic Church (cf faith and no works and works and no faith)

## SPIRITUALITY

Of or concerning the spirit as opposed to matter .. concerned with sacred or religious things.; concerned with the soul or spirit not with external reality ( Concise Oxford Dictionary).

The search for the sacred....where “sacred means set apart from the ordinary. The notion of spiritual experience plays an important role in modern spirituality (Wikipedia).

In modern times spirituality has acquired a new meaning. It still denotes a process of transformation but is often seen as separate from religious institutions. (Wikipedia)

In a biblical context spirituality means being animated by God; to be driven by the Holy Spirit as opposed to a life which rejects this influence.

Over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century we see spirituality and religion ( especially Christian religion) becoming more and more disconnected.

Catholic spirituality is the spiritual practice of living out a personal act of faith and following the acceptance of faith.

Ignatian spirituality is essentially based on the Spiritual Exercises written by St Ignatius as a method of retreat which employs an ordered sequence of prayers and contemplations to develop a significant choice in life towards greater love and service of God. Some principal features include:

- Awareness examen; being a structured review of each day employed to discover God’s movements and actions within ones daily life
- Seeing God in all things
- God’s preferential option for the poor

Split spirituality is “ spirituality without some visible form is like breath without a body. On the other hand a visible form (eg Church) without spirituality is like a body without breath.” (Gerard Hughes SJ)

*Take and Receive*

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,  
My memory, my understanding,  
And my entire will,  
All I have and call my own.  
You have given all to me.  
To you, Lord, I return it.  
Everything is yours; do with it what you will.  
Give me only your love and your grace;  
That is enough for me.

*(—St. Ignatius of Loyola)*

taken no pleasure. See, God, I have come to your will, O God' All of the book it is written )"

above, "You have neither pleasure in sacrifices and burnt offerings and sin offerings offered according to the old, "See, I have come to abolish the first in order second. 10And it is by God's grace been sanctified through the body of Jesus Christ once

priest stands day after day offering again and again the that can never take away

Christ had offered for all sinners, "he sat down of God," 13and since then "until his enemies would cool for his feet." 14For by he has perfected for all time sanctified. 15And the Holy Spirit says to us, for after saying, "I will make them

as, says the Lord: "I will cleanse their hearts, and I will cleanse their minds,"

for their sins and their hearts leads no more." forgiveness of these, there offering for sin.

my friends, since we have entered the sanctuary by the blood of the new and living covenant (not by the old, though made for us through the flesh), 21and that priest over the house of God, who has approached with a true heart and faith, with our hearts cleansed from an evil conscience and with pure water. 23Let us have a confession of our hope for the one who has promised to let us consider how to love and good things to meet together, come, but encouraging one another the more as you see

g.   
 es lack and goats   
 or ancient authorities   
 cleaning of Gk uncertain   
 his one   
 i Gk Therefore; brothers

26 For if we willfully persist in sin after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. 28Anyone who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy "on the testimony of two or three witnesses." 29How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by those who have spurned the Son of God, profaned the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace? 30For we know the one who said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." 31It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32 But recall those earlier days when, after you had been enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, 33sometimes being publicly exposed to abuse and persecution, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. 34For you had compassion for those who were in prison, and you cheerfully accepted the plundering of your possessions, knowing that you yourselves possessed something better and more lasting. 35Do not, therefore, abandon that confidence of yours; it brings a great reward. 36For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. 37For yet

"in a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay;

38 but my righteous one will live by faith. My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back."

39But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved.

The Meaning of Faith

11 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. 3By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible. b

The Examples of Abel, Enoch, and Noah

4 By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain's. Through this he received approval as righteous, God himself giving approval to his gifts; he died, but through his faith d he still speaks. 5By faith Enoch was taken so that he did not experience death; and "he was not found, because God had taken him." For it was attested before he was taken away that "he

had pleased God." 6And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. 7By faith Noah, warned by God about events as yet unseen, respected the warning and built an ark to save his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir to the righteousness that is in accordance with faith.

The Faith of Abraham

8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. 9By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. 11By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised. e 12Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, "as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore."

13 All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, 14for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. 15If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. 16But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

17 By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son, 18of whom he had been told, "It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you." 19He considered the fact that God is able even to raise someone from the dead—and figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. 20By faith Isaac invoked blessings for the future on Jacob and Esau. 21By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, "bowing in worship

a Gk by this b Or was not made out of visible things c Gk greater d Gk through it e Or By faith Sarah herself, though barren, received power to conceive, even when she was too old, because she considered him faithful who had promised.

world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? <sup>6</sup>But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? <sup>7</sup>Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

<sup>8</sup>You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>9</sup>But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup>For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. <sup>11</sup>For the one who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. <sup>12</sup>So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup>For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

#### *Faith without Works Is Dead*

<sup>14</sup>What good is it, my brothers and sisters,<sup>a</sup> if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? <sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? <sup>17</sup>So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

<sup>18</sup>But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. <sup>19</sup>You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder. <sup>20</sup>Do you want to be shown, you senseless person, that faith apart from works is barren? <sup>21</sup>Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup>You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works. <sup>23</sup>Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God. <sup>24</sup>You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. <sup>25</sup>Likewise, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another road? <sup>26</sup>For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.

#### *Taming the Tongue*

<sup>3</sup>Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters,<sup>a</sup> for you know that we who teach will be judged with

greater strictness. <sup>2</sup>For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. <sup>3</sup>If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. <sup>4</sup>Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. <sup>5</sup>So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! <sup>6</sup>And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature,<sup>b</sup> and is itself set on fire by hell.<sup>c</sup> <sup>7</sup>For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, <sup>8</sup>but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup>With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. <sup>10</sup>From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters,<sup>d</sup> this ought not to be so. <sup>11</sup>Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? <sup>12</sup>Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters,<sup>e</sup> yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

#### *Two Kinds of Wisdom*

<sup>13</sup>Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. <sup>14</sup>But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. <sup>15</sup>Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. <sup>16</sup>For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. <sup>18</sup>And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for<sup>f</sup> those who make peace.

#### *Friendship with the World*

<sup>4</sup>Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? <sup>2</sup>You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet<sup>g</sup> something and cannot obtain it; so

<sup>a</sup> Gk brothers <sup>b</sup> Or wheel of birth <sup>c</sup> Gk Gehenna  
<sup>d</sup> Gk My brothers <sup>e</sup> Gk my brothers <sup>f</sup> Or by  
<sup>g</sup> Or you murder and you covet

On Anothers Sorrow (William Blake)

⊗ Can I see anothers woe,  
And not be in sorrow too.  
Can I see anothers grief,  
And not seek for kind relief.

Can I see a falling tear,  
And not feel my sorrows share,  
Can a father see his child,  
Weep, nor be with sorrow fill'd.

Can a mother sit and hear,  
An infant groan an infant fear –  
No no never can it be.  
Never never can it be.

And can he who smiles on all  
Hear the wren with sorrows small,  
Hear the small birds grief & care  
Hear the woes that infants bear –

And not sit beside the nest  
Pouring pity in their breast,  
And not sit the cradle near  
Weeping tear on infants tear.

And not sit both night & day,  
Wiping all our tears away.  
O! no never can it be.  
Never never can it be.

⊗ He doth give his joy to all.  
He becomes an infant small.  
He becomes a man of woe  
He doth feel the sorrow too.

⊗ Think not, thou canst sigh a sigh,  
And thy maker is not by.

Think not, thou canst weep a tear,  
And thy maker is not near.

⊗ O! he gives to us his joy,  
That our grief he may destroy  
Till our grief is fled & gone  
He doth sit by us and moan

## SILENCE (Shusaku Endo)

'But do you still believe?', asked the priest, doing his best to put up with the foul stench of the other's breath. 'I will give you absolution, but I cannot trust you. I cannot understand why you have come here.'

Heaving a deep sigh and searching for words of explanation, Kichijiro shifted and shuffled. The stench of his filth and sweat was wafted toward the priest. Could it be possible that Christ loved and searched after this dirtiest of men? In evil there remained that strength and beauty of evil; but this Kichijiro was not even worthy to be called evil. He was thin and dirty like the tattered rags he wore. Suppressing his disgust, the priest recited the final words of absolution, and then, following the established custom, he whispered, 'Go in peace.' With all possible speed getting away from the stench of that mouth and that body, he returned to where the Christians were.

No, no. Our Lord had searched out the ragged and the dirty. Thus he reflected as he lay in bed. Among the people who appeared in the pages of the Scripture, those whom Christ had searched after in love were the woman of Capharnaum with the issue of blood,

the woman taken in adultery whom men had wanted to stone—people with no attraction, no beauty. Anyone could be attracted by the beautiful and the charming. But could such attraction be called love? True love was to accept humanity when wasted like rags and tatters. Theoretically the priest knew all this; but still he could not forgive Kichijiro. Once again near his face came the face of Christ, wet with tears. When the gentle eyes looked straight into his, the priest was filled with shame.



# THE CONSCIOUSNESS EXAMEN

The Examen is quite simple and natural. It can be done twice a day, once a day, once every few days—however often a person feels moved to do it with the greatest fruit. The more we do it, the more natural it becomes for us, and it eventually becomes a way of consciousness, a way of being in ever-closer relationship with God. Performing it can take anywhere between five and fifteen minutes. It doesn't really matter how long you spend; the important thing is that you open yourself up to recognizing and responding to God's movements in you. However, it is better not to go longer than fifteen minutes; anything beyond this time begins to move the Examen's focus away from being a review of our relationship with God during a period of time.

Saint Ignatius suggests five steps to the Examen. Before looking at those, however, it is well to realize that eventually one needs to structure the examen in a way that is most helpful and natural for each given person. There is no one right way to do it; nor is there a need to go through all of Saint Ignatius's five points each time. You might, for instance, find yourself spending time on the first point at one time, and on the fifth point at some other time. Go to wherever you are drawn.

Saint Ignatius's five points are as follows:

- ◆ *Prayer for Light:* I am before God who loves me and welcomes me, who enlightens me and guides me. I embrace God who lives and grows in me.
- ◆ *Gratitude:* I give thanks for what I have done and for what I have received this day, both pleasant and difficult, for the word of encouragement and the generous gesture, for my family and work, my community, for the time to pray and to laugh and to cry.
- ◆ *Review of the Day:*
  - What has happened to me in my life, my work, my relationships? How has God been working in me? What has been asked of me?
  - What has been the quality of my response: with love

or selfishness, with honesty or deceit?

◆ *Ask for Forgiveness:* I ask pardon for when I refused to understand my sisters and brothers in their pain, for passing up the opportunity to be useful, for my failure in loving, for injustices, for oppression. I ask pardon for not loving God and all creation in every part of my life.

◆ *Hopeful Recommitment:* I seek to respond and trust God, aware of my weakness but confident in God's strength and mercy. I want to flourish for my sisters and brothers. I renew my commitment to follow the path that God offers me to be a source of light for all creation. Saint Ignatius suggests ending with an *Our Father*.\*

*Reflection:* How has the Examen helped me see God in my life?

*Symbol:* Find something that expresses reconciliation and closeness to God.

*Grace Received:* How has God touched you in this exercise? How were you moved? This will be the focus of your next meeting's faith-sharing.

*Through the daily faith-consciousness examen  
and through personal and communal discernment,  
we try to give an apostolic sense  
to even the most humble realities of daily life.*  
—General Principles, #8b.

\* For a complete treatment of the Consciousness Examen, see *Canadian Manual*, pp. R95-101.

and Todd, for the very helpful and encouraging comment he gave me on an early and incomplete manuscript.

Gerard Hughes  
Birmingham, 2003

## SPLIT SPIRITUALITY

*Gerard Hughes SJ*

### Spirituality Popular: Churchgoing Dwindling

**S**PIRITUALITY HAS BECOME A fashionable word. Thirty years ago it was rarely used outside religious circles: today it appears frequently in the press and in novels, plays and films. We find the word in political manifestos and in the proposals of government, education authorities and the health service. 'Spirituality' has found its way into business boardrooms, and in many large bookshops there is a prominent 'spirituality' section on the ground floor. In the same shops, 'religious' books are likely to occupy a few shelves upstairs!

Today's growing interest in spirituality is accompanied by a growing disinterest in churchgoing, with the exception of those who attend some of the black-led churches. According to the survey compiled for the BBC *Soul of Britain* series, church attendance fell by over 20 per cent in the years between 1989 and 1998. According to the same survey, more than 76 per cent of the national population had undergone a spiritual or religious experience that was still affecting them. These are remarkable statistics. I do not know the average age of the congregations to whom the churches minister, but in my experience of church meetings and church services, the average age of the regular churchgoer is about fifty-five and rising annually.

People are looking for spiritual guidance and the majority fail to find it in the mainstream Christian churches. Today we distinguish between being 'spiritual' and being 'religious'. In this context, the word 'religious' implies membership of a particular church, regular attendance at its services, and adherence to its regulations. It is very often the most Christ-centred and committed people who are particularly critical of the Church, as they experience it. The 'Church' is accused of being hypocritical and out of touch, and more interested in self-preservation than in caring for others. The clergy are accused of being unable to listen, unable to accept criticism, and of behaving like control freaks. In such criticisms, Church/institution tends to be identified with existing clerical structures.

### Pie in the Sky?

We have a very understandable movement away from 'Church' alongside a growing interest in spirituality: this is a clear indication of a spirituality that is seriously split. Spirituality without some visible form is like breath without a body. On the other hand, a visible form (Church) without spirituality is like a body without breath.

Spiritual movements have been springing up within Christianity since New Testament times, engendering great enthusiasm, attracting thousands of very committed people, and then splitting into separate factions before disappearing altogether. Christianity is, essentially, a down-to-earth religion. In the words of St Irenaeus writing in the second century, 'God became a human being, so that human beings might become God.' The word 'spirituality' refers to the presence of God, 'the Spirit' within us and among us. God is the Spirit of unity, of love and of compassion. If our life in the Spirit is genuine, it must find expression in the way we relate to one another and the way in which we organise our lives, both corporately and as individuals.

The essence of Church is the Spirit of God, and the Church is called to be the effective sign of God's presence within us and among us. I am using the word 'Church' in the sense of the visible inter-relationship that must grow and develop among those who become aware of, and respond to, the Spirit rather than referring

to any particular Church. A key function of Church is to point beyond itself and to make us more perceptive and responsive to the Spirit present in all peoples and all things. All church structures need to be provisional, and all are in continuous need of reform – if we divinise particular structures we are in danger of falling into idolatry. The Spirit is found through our relationships with other human beings, and in order to enable us to relate successfully we need an organisation that is pliant and adaptable because it is open to the Spirit. Spirituality that is not embodied in some kind of organisation easily becomes 'pie in the sky', while Church without spirituality can pose a dangerous threat to human life and freedom.

### Spirituality/Church?

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines the word 'spiritual' as follows:

- 1 of, or concerning, the spirit as opposed to matter.
- 2 concerned with sacred or religious things; holy; divine; inspired. 3 (of the mind etc.) refined, sensitive; not concerned with the material. 4 (of a relationship etc.) concerned with the soul or spirit etc., not with external reality.

According to this definition, the only link between the spiritual and the material is to be found in 'sacred or religious things'. In the light of such a definition it is hardly surprising that we should have difficulty in explaining the relationship between spirituality and everyday life. Readers may well ask themselves whether, according to this definition, they rank as spiritual persons or not. How much time, attention and energy do I give to sacred things – the Church, religion, and so on – as compared with the attention I give to material things? What would be the effect upon you and your household if you became 'spiritual' according to the dictionary definition?

Such a definition reveals the enormous split in our spirituality. By 'split' I mean that God and the things of God are divided off from ordinary everyday life. God is confined to Church, religion, the sacred and the intangible. In the light of such a definition we could be forgiven for supposing that 'spiritual' persons must have minds and emotions of a highly refined and delicate quality – so

refined that they are unconcerned with other human beings or with any created thing apart from those that qualify as 'sacred' or 'religious'.

### Theological Language Underpins the Split

We speak of natural and supernatural, spiritual and material, eternal and temporal, sacred and secular, grace and nature. While these can be useful distinctions, they can easily be misunderstood to indicate that there are two separate layers of reality: the natural, material layer, and the supernatural, spiritual layer. The conscientious Christian is encouraged to consider the supernatural to be of greater importance than the natural, the spiritual as more important than the material. And grace is perceived as being of infinitely greater value than nature. Such misunderstanding leads us into 'doublethink'. Imagine that you are setting off on a long-distance flight and you find yourself praying for a safe journey. What kind of pilot would you like God to provide for you? A pilot who is spiritual according to the dictionary definition, a pilot whose mind is on God, the soul, the sacred, etc., and not on material and temporal things? Or would you prefer a good solid atheist whose primary interest during the flight is concentrated on the instrument panel and bringing the material plane with its material passengers safely back to their earthly destination?

### Religious Instruction Confirms the Split

I was brought up as a Roman Catholic. From an early age I knew that God was all important, and for that I am grateful. God, in my childhood memory, was as homely and familiar as the rest of my family. Saying nightly prayers was as natural as kissing my parents goodnight, although the prayers took a bit longer. On reflection, my difficulties with God began when I was given religious instruction.

The spirituality presented to the Roman Catholic Church of my generation was divisive and split. It was divisive because we were taught that there was no salvation outside the Church, which was one, true, Catholic and apostolic. So the world was divided into Catholics and non-Catholics. As Catholics, we were forbidden

to take part in the services and prayers of a 'false' religion, which banned us from attendance at any other Christian Church apart from the Greek and Russian Orthodox. It was divisive within our own lives, because we were taught an extremely split and dualist spirituality. The body, of which we were most immediately aware, was considered to be a threat to the spirit. One Catechism question enquired: 'Of which must you take most care, of your body or of your soul?' The answer was: 'I must take most care of my soul. The body, if not corrected by self-denial, will certainly carry us to hell!' Such a spirituality was also divisive in leading us to think of God as separate and apart from us. In the words of the Catholic Catechism of my generation, God was 'The supreme Spirit who alone exists of Himself and is infinite in all perfections'. Not the kind of God with whom one could feel at home, or want to have around on holidays. Because the spiritual was so emphasised and separated from the material, 'worldly' matters were not considered important. Worldly matters included our total emotional life. True faith did not seem to have much relationship to our experience of life on earth. Consequently, one could be a devout and committed Catholic without any awareness that political, social, economic and cultural questions were not only relevant to living faith in God, but integral to that faith. In 1891 Pope Leo XIII had published the first great social encyclical, which came to be known as 'The Worker's Charter', but its importance and implications had still to reach most of the pews fifty years later. There was, however, a great emphasis on the 'corporal works of mercy', food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, shelter for the homeless, etc. If Catholics did not necessarily tend to think globally, they generally acted locally with great generosity.

The previous paragraph is a deliberate caricature in order to show the extent to which my early religious instruction encouraged a 'split' spirituality. Such a caricature fails to do justice to the very attractive elements I found in Roman Catholicism, and that I still find there. It is this very attractiveness that leads me to complain constantly about the split that hides the face of God. Until we acknowledge the enormity of this split in our spirituality, we shall be unable to change; church numbers will continue to dwindle, and we shall find ourselves clinging to some Christless structure.



### The Split Affects All Christian Denominations

It may be objected that the spirituality that I have been describing is no longer taught within the Roman Catholic Church. Why am I harping on about past history when today's spirituality is far less dualistic and much more integrated?

The problem of split spirituality is wider and deeper than we realise. For the past forty years I have worked with Christians of many different denominations. The details of our spiritual upbringing may be different, but, in my experience, we all suffer from a split in our spirituality.

I worked at one time with a group of Christian psychotherapists, the majority of whose clients were Roman Catholic priests or members of religious congregations. On one occasion I asked the psychotherapists whether they ever asked clients about their prayer life. Their unanimous answer was 'No'. When I asked the reason, I was told that it would be 'unprofessional' to enquire about the prayer life of clients. The reason given was that if the psychotherapist focused attention on a client's prayer, the client might use prayer as a way of escaping from the psychological problems that had to be faced. If prayer is based upon a split spirituality it is undoubtedly true that it can be used as a way of escaping the problems that beset us, but this type of prayer tries to bypass the facts. And God is always in the facts. We cannot escape God's reality checks for long!

It is possible to use forms of prayer that are 'unearthed', which bear no relation to what is, in fact, going on, as a way of escaping from our responsibilities. The psychotherapists with whom I worked were aware of this problem and their reaction was understandable, but they were wrong in assuming that their clients' prayer was necessarily split.

A divided spirituality leads us to split the spiritual from the psychological, as though the two words referred to different parts of the person. This is a dangerous misunderstanding. It can, for example, lead us to think that the only people who are suitable for spirituality work are those who are 100 per cent psychologically sound. Such a principle would have excluded many of the greatest saints from spirituality work, not to mention the vast majority of the human race! There is no inner state in any human being that

can be described as 'purely psychological', for God is present and at work in all our states. The distinction between psychological and spiritual does not denote two separate areas of our human psyche. It rather indicates two different ways of approaching the single psyche. As psychologists and as spiritual guides we must not create no-go areas for God -- or for the psychologist. It is, however, necessary and valid to approach those areas in differing ways. It is in this context that there is a valid distinction between the spiritual and the psychological.

### ✓ The Split Continues

The majority of Christians in the developed world are not opposed to a nuclear defence policy, and an even greater majority still believe in the necessity of war to preserve peace on earth. This support for nuclear defence and for war as a means of bringing peace is an indication of the divided nature of our spirituality. We all want peace, and we reckon that the possession of a nuclear arsenal, as well as conventional arms, is the best way of ensuring that peace. Most nations subscribe to the Roman aphorism 'To preserve peace, prepare for war', an aphorism that wins the support of the majority in most Western countries. Because of our split spirituality we can both pray for peace and at the same time support a policy of national defence that militates against peace. While our reason may convince us that the possession of nuclear arms is justified, ethical and sensible, we may experience acute discomfort if we allow God to enter into our prayer for peace. When Jesus appeared to his frightened disciples on Easter Sunday evening, he said 'Peace be with you' and showed them his hands and his side (John 20:20). The world's peace is achieved through trying to become invulnerable: Christ's peace comes through vulnerability. This truth brings us to the very uncomfortable heart of the matter.

We have become so used to a split spirituality that we no longer notice the split, which divides our hearts from our heads, our reason from our emotion. Consequently, we can produce well-reasoned arguments in favour of war and of the need for nuclear arms while, at the same time, praying to God earnestly and sincerely for peace. Without realising what we are doing, we take remarkable care not to let God interfere with our practical plans