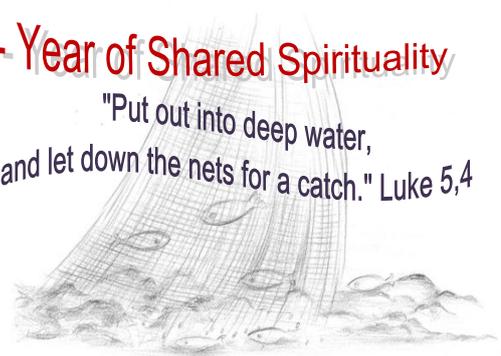




Journey of Enrichment

2011 - Year of Shared Spirituality

"Put out into deep water,
and let down the nets for a catch." Luke 5,4



THE HEART OF GOD/ THE GOOD SHEPHERD

"Who is God for me? By what name do I call God? How does God call me? We struggle to find words or images in response to these questions, knowing that nothing can capture the "breadth and depth" of God and God's desire to be in relationship with us.

John Eudes and Mary Euphrasia are significant companions in the adventure of opening ourselves and responding to God's longing for us. Both of them lived a spirituality that was affective, practical and enthusiastic. They encourage us to turn to God through the symbolism of the heart.

John Eudes invites us to discover the Heart of God. He speaks of God as being "the source of every mercy and the one who so wonderfully comforts and strengthens us" (2 Cor 1:3). God takes to heart all our sorrows and is capable of suffering with us and feeling the depths of our pain. God has an infinite desire to free us and to share with us God's everlasting joy.¹

Following SJE's main theme that our lives must be a continuation of Christ's life, SME seeks to love like Christ "who loves with a human heart"(Gaudium et Spes 22) taking on all that is human and being deeply sensitive to the heartbreak of the world. Steeped in scripture and in SJE's writings, SME discovers the heart of God incarnated and personified in the image of Jesus the Good Shepherd (Jn 10). She frequently focuses on this image that powerfully expresses for her the tenderness and steadfast love of the heart of God. "The Good Shepherd is the divine original that we must strive to reproduce in our whole conduct. [...] We must endeavour on our side to form ourselves to his spirit and live his very life."²

Our relationship with God evolves and deepens as we grow in knowledge of God and of our world. An example of this is found in the new understanding of the universe which brings to light the interconnectedness of all life. This shifts our focus to the Cosmic Christ revealed in the Pauline epistles as the firstborn of all creation; the One through whom all things are created [...] and in whom all things hold together (Col 1:15-20). The Cosmic Christ is at the centre of matter, fire and energy—the total gratuity of God's hospitality that extends to all creation. John Eudes already talks of the cosmic influence of the Heart of Christ, "nothing escapes the warmth of Christ's love. Yes, the Heart of fire spread throughout the universe."³

Questions for Reflection and Sharing: How have your images of God developed and evolved through your family, community and life experiences? What images of God speak to your culture at this time? How do you express the attitudes of God's Heart/Good Shepherd in your life?

Prayer:

O God the source of every mercy, your goodness is without measure. You reveal the amazing love of your Great Heart through the incarnation of Christ, your beloved Son, the Good Shepherd. You are the One who so wonderfully comforts and strengthens us. May our hearts be so united in You that together we may share the power of your compassion and love throughout the universe.

Suggested Reading: Lectionary Proper to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary 1989, Chap. 43 &48
St. Mary Euphrasia's Conferences, Chap. 6
Pierre Teilhard de Chardin "Hymn of the Universe"

October 2011

¹ Œuvres Complètes de SJE, Tome VII, p 500

² SME Conference 6

³ Œuvres Complètes de SJE, Tome XI, p 469