

The background of the entire page is a painting. It depicts a large, bright yellow sun with visible brushstrokes, radiating light across the sky. Below the sun is a dense field of tall, golden-brown grass or reeds, also rendered with expressive brushwork. At the bottom of the image, there is a body of water in shades of blue and purple, with reflections of the sun and the sky. The overall style is impressionistic, with a focus on light and color.

LOVE REVEALED

An Appreciation of Family and Friendships

15th July 2019

Each of us is created in God's image. Our worth is a given.
It is not earned.

Although our limitations distort this image, by God's grace,
we can reflect His glory to each other.

When we are captivated by God's love for us, we are driven
outside of ourselves to grow in being His likeness to each other.

Being created in the image of God and made for one another
means that, in our essence, we are an innate longing to be loved
and to be loving.

Knowing what love is not, we long for what it is.

LOVE REVEALED

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.
There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.
We love because he first loved us.


1 John 4:16, 18, 19

The triune God is a communion of love, and the family is its living reflection.

Pope Francis *Amoris Laetitia*

Faithful friends are life-saving medicine.

Sirach 6:16



The supreme happiness in life
is the conviction that we are loved
– loved for ourselves, or rather, loved in spite of ourselves.

Victor Hugo

And did you get what you wanted from this life, even so?
I did. And what did you want?
To call myself beloved,
to feel myself beloved on the earth.

Raymond Carver *Late Fragment*

The most important fact in all of Theology and Spirituality
is that the three persons of the Trinity
want to reveal themselves to each person.

Karl Rahner SJ



Candle
Gerhard Richter

This is the unique feature of human beings:
their desire is greater than the infinite universe.

Julián Carrón *Disarming Beauty*



Sower with Setting Sun
Vincent Van Gogh

As for the part in the rich soil, this is people with a noble and generous heart
who have heard the word and take it to themselves
and yield a harvest through their perseverance.

Luke 8:15

I FINDING THE ORIGIN OF ONE'S HEART – THE LOVE OF OUR FATHER

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness."

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them,
male and female he created them."

Genesis 1:26,27

At the centre of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusion, a point of pure truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God, which is never at our disposal, from which God disposes of our lives, which is inaccessible to the fantasies of our own mind or the brutalities of our own will. This little point of nothingness and of absolute poverty is the pure glory of God in us. It is so to speak His name written in us, as our poverty, as our indigence, as our dependence ... It is like a pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven. It is in everybody, and if we could see it we would see these billions of points of light coming together in the face and blaze of a sun that would make all the darkness and cruelty of life vanish completely ... I have no program for this seeing. It is only given. But the gate of heaven is everywhere.

Thomas Merton *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*

In each of our hearts lies a place where the Mystery reveals itself and enlightens the person,
making one the protagonist of his or her history.

Pope Francis 11 November 2017

God exists and he has given us life. He alone is absolute, faithful and unfailing love, that infinite goal that is glimpsed behind the good, the true and beautiful things of this world, admirable indeed, but insufficient for the human heart.

He alone, therefore, is able to meet the expectations of our heart and make it happy.

Julián Carrón *Disarming Beauty*

O be joyful in the Lord all ye lands;
serve the Lord with gladness
and come before his presence with a song.
Be ye sure that the Lord he is God;
it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.
O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving
and into his courts with praise;
be thankful unto him and speak good of his name.
For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting,
and his truth endureth from generation to generation.

Psalms 99 (100)



Absent Presence
Integritas

The centre that I cannot find is known to my unconscious mind.
W.H. Auden

II FINDING THE CENTRE OF ONE'S HEART – THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

I sought him whom my heart loves. I sought but did not find him. I will seek him whom my heart loves.
‘Have you seen him whom my heart loves?’
The Song of Songs 3:1,2,3

The heart is struck and wounded by the desperation of never attaining what it desires, but this veil of sadness is removed when it learns that the possession of He who the heart loves lies in never ceasing to desire Him.
St Gregory of Nyssa

Neither painting nor sculpture can any longer quieten my soul, turned now to that divine love which on the cross to embrace us, opened wide its arms.
Michelangelo

Being Christian is not an ethical choice or a lofty ideal, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.
Pope Benedict XVI *Deus Caritas Est*

The “I” is this search for a love that holds up against the challenges of living.

The person of Jesus is so great and precious a good because he alone fully corresponds to the human thirst for happiness. And the exceptional correspondence he brings about in those who meet him makes them capable of relating to reality in an absolutely gratuitous way.

To be for everybody, it is necessary to belong to One, to him who alone can give us that satisfaction that makes us free to be truly ourselves, to be an original presence and not a reactive presence.

Julián Carrón *Disarming Beauty*

When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come and see.”
John 1:38-39

The disciples heard Jesus calling them to be his friends. It was an invitation that did not pressure them, but gently appealed to their freedom. ‘Come and see’, Jesus told them; so ‘they came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day’ (Jn 1:39). After that unexpected and moving encounter, they left everything and followed him.
Pope Francis *Christus Vivit*



The Icon of the Crucifixion
Integritas

And I, when I am lifted up from the earth,
will draw all people to myself.
John 12:32



III FINDING HIM IN THE HEART OF ANOTHER -THE MOVEMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The encounter with the beauty of Christ that shines through the face of a human being can become an arrow that wounds the soul, and so opens our eyes, allowing us to recognize him. This is what each of us is longing for, and our contemporaries together with us. We will be able to communicate this only by yielding to his attraction.

When we fall in love, more than in any other experience, all of our being is awakened by the other person. Strangely, the person who awakens my I, makes me sense a promise of fulfilment which he or she, however, cannot keep. In this sense we are introduced to a paradox. Someone makes me a promise that they cannot keep. And this is the instrument that God uses to intensify our desire and quest for Him, for the Mystery that alone can fulfil our desire. Only Christ can keep this promise and only with Christ can I have a true relationship with the person I love, not demanding or expecting something which he or she causes me to desire but cannot give me.

Here the nature of the marriage vocation is fully revealed: walking together towards the only one who can answer the thirst for happiness that the other arouses constantly in me: Christ.

What enables a married man and woman to avoid being consumed by pretence or resignation? It is necessary for them to live in the ambit of a greater love, that is, that there be a place where they can always rediscover Christ as the fulfilment of their humanity.

Christ, beauty made flesh, places “himself at the core of man’s affection and freedom,” at the “core of these natural sentiments, the place he rightfully assumes is their true root.” [quotations from Luigi Giussani]

Jesus reveals the importance of the promise his person constitutes for those who let him in. It is not an interference on Jesus’ part in the most intimate level of human feelings, but rather the greatest promise ever made to man: the fulfilment of all his human desire, which is Jesus’ very person. Therefore, if you do not love Christ, Beauty made flesh, more than the person you love, the latter relationship withers, because Christ is the truth of this relationship, the fullness to which both partners point, and in whom their relationship is fulfilled.


Only by letting him in is it possible for the most beautiful relationship that can happen in life not to be corrupted and die in time. This is the audacity of his claim.



Enfolding Presence
Integritas

We are enfolded in the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit.
And the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are enfolded in us:
all-mighty, all-wisdom, all-goodness, one God, one Lord.

Lady Julian of Norwich
14th Century



If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging symbol. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to my childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three, and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.

You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

John 15:9-17



THE PURPOSE OF LOVE REVEALED

THAT ALL MAY BE ONE

UT UNUM SINT

That they all may be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 17:21-23

Friendship is so important that Jesus calls himself a friend: 'I do not call you servants any longer, but I call you friends' (Jn 15:15). By the gift of his grace, we are elevated in such a way that we truly become his friends. With the same love that Christ pours out on us, we can love him in turn and share his love with others, in the hope that they too will take their place in the community of friendship he established. And even as he enjoys the complete bliss of the life of the Resurrection, we, for our part, can work generously to help him build his kingdom in this world, by bringing his message, his light, and above all his love, to others (cf. Jn 15:16)

Pope Francis *Christus Vivit*

THE INTEGRITAS PRAYER

May we enable each other to trust entirely in the provident love of God.
May we form family, community and a deeper identity
in the gentle attraction of Jesus Christ.
May we support one another in responding to the unique call of the Spirit
and serve as one in realising the dream of the Spirit for all;
so that in this covenant, may we remain in Christ
and with Christ in each of us,
may we come to be at One.



Trinity
Andrei Rublev

If truth is disconnected, if it is not relationship, you do not understand. As Pope Francis wrote to Eugenio Scalfari: “Truth, according to the Christian faith, is the love of God for us in Christ. Therefore, truth is a relationship.”

If I am certain of this Presence that invades life, I can face any circumstance, any wound, any objection, any repercussion, any attack, because all this opens me up to awaiting the way the Mystery will become present, to suggest the path to me, to accompany me even in entering darkness, according to a design that is not mine.

Julián Carrón *Disarming Beauty*



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