

## ADORATION

1. The Year of Order Council is a time of profound transformation and reformulation of our lives before the Mystery in the presence of The Other world, or it is nothing. If this miracle does not happen, all other inventions, new ideas, new ways to go, new economic or strategy modes, will be built on sand, however ingenious they may be. The question for the year is not whether we have the capacity to invent the consensual process that will yield a significant future life and mission; we know we can do that. The question is whether we will make the decisions we need to make. In allowing the real questions of the year to seize our gizzards, we experience the void: how do we stand before All That Ever Was, before All That's Yet To Be, before our own irreplaceable uniqueness as an order, and, as an order, All Being in Myself? What are the relevant forms of honoring the Mystery, of replicating Transparency, of Doing the Mystery, and so Saving the Mystery and participating in the life of the Mystery? On behalf of three billion people who die and never live?

2. This is a time of radical transformation for each member of the Order: symbolic, extended, movemental. It will demand more than research and model-building capacity, however useful these are. It will demand our death in the form of searing detachment from past models, styles, locations, beliefs, principles, strategies, rituals, configurations, security blankets of various kinds, favorite projects, family, nation, habit patterns, missional thrusts, - on and on and on. It will demand a radical obedience to The Other World, the indicatives of history, our covenant, and our corporateness. The Mystery will demand we pay our dues: it will hurt; our multifarious loyalties will be summoned to stand before the one final Mystery, before a world of innocent suffering, and before an overwhelming possibility for the whole order. We are standing before the prospect of a radical recreation of every single aspect of our life and mission.

3. Our common memory reminds us of three forms of loyalty that continue to appear in history: 1. The polytheism of multiple sources of value with no final centre; e.g., job, family, status, the good life, health, security, and so on. 2. henotheism with its centre as a group, a people, a nation, to which all other values are subordinate, and from which other values receive their significance. 3. Monotheism, devoted to one final centre of loyalty - the Mystery of life and death, the Unsynonomous, Being itself, to which every other value is subordinated in its pure form of radical monotheism, which, as Niebuhr points out, is a rare form of response, never popular in history. The Year of Order Council will be prime viewing time for watching and combating Satan at work as (s)he sets up smoke screens of conflicting or bogus loyalties, vying with each other for attention. "The War of the Gods" will demand searing detachment from all our little tin idols, as we prepare ourselves to answer the three final questions of Who Are We, What Do We, and How Be We. Those who hold onto the Order as what finally gives their lives meaning may be shocked at what we discover the mystery is really demanding of us so that we can serve the world relevantly. The Mystery is growing savage: many of our favorite puppies may have to go. One way or the other, we will be driven to the question of adoration.

4. Adoration is not something new. We have come at it through the Psalms, the New Religious Mode, The Other World, and our forms of worship. Confession, Praise, and Dedication; Humility, Gratitude, and Compassion as the structure and moods of worship are related to adoration. In recent ritual experiments we have expressed concern over setting hold of the real experience of each mood: our shorter offices have little opportunity; we have been concerned with how we adore the Mystery beyond Mystery, beyond simply rehearsing our current forms of mission; we have been concerned with the on-behalf-of nature of worship, and more lately, with what an ecstatic form of ritual would look like.

5. The New Religious Mode is a map of the interior drama and journey of adoring the One In the One, and transparently serving an unawakened or inert world of suffering. Chastity is the structuring of the One in the One into a human's life standing in the radical tension between life-giving detachment and life-giving obedience: adoration in action; contemplation happens at the flash point of interior sociality and solitarily pushing one's external situation to interior ultimacy. It is the adoration ordering of one's interior life. Being, holding the tension of all polarities of the NRM, including the Journey, is embodying the glory of being fully on-behalf-of dead, and fully on-behalf-of alive. "The glory of God is a human fully alive".

6. The Psalms allowed us to experience the existential drama of confession, praise and dedication. In 1971, we practiced the whimper of confession, and the roar of praise, got beyond the piousness of emotions to their grounding in the experience of ultimacy. Perhaps for the first time we grasped the possibility of ecstatic confession, praise, and dedication, beyond a fine, whumped-up Daily Ritual. The Other World gave us poetry for grasping a

world of phenomenological experience that we suspected but could never name or map. The Land of Mystery gave us the poetry of "being reluctantly lovesick, hopelessly enamoured, I am enraptured," in the state of being of singular adoration. The writer of the paper Reconciliation gave us another great piece of poetry for adoration: "it's like making love to a porcupine"- no ecstatic romanticism in adoration!

7. So, what is ADORATION? Perhaps one way to come at it is to say that it is: first, a state of being (as described in Trek IV of The Land of Mystery). Second, it is a gift; third, it is a style of being; fourth, it is an exercise. It has to do with what God has wrought; it is relationship to Mystery beyond knowing that sends shockwaves through every other relationship, and involves a radical, total, and unconditioned covenant. It is wonder at the multifariousness and unity of creation: a profound appreciation of creation It is a sub-rational relationship to Mystery and a gift of the One. It has to do with a physical reality: willing one thing; it reflects a state of being associated with the focused life; it has to do with the resurrectional principle: with the Nevertheless, and with living on the other side of the Nevertheless. It has to do with the quality of SOUL - the roar of a lion, rather than the bleat of the (sacrificial) lamb. It can only be done as art. As art, we can think of it as forms of praise of God, accompanied by instruments of the orchestra (as in the Psalms of praise) involving the wildness of ecstafication, and presupposing the willing of one thing while maintaining the paradox.

8. Phenomenologically, it could be described under the categories of 1. the scream; 2. the seizure; 3. the silence; 4. the action. Perhaps, the following categories might be useful in helping us to get a hold of it. Adoration is: I. INTERIOR PROSTRATION: the sense of contingency, fragility, terror, and yet, wonder in relation to the All that is at stake; it is the terror of being chosen as a corporate body, to take charge of history and be co-creators in directing its course; it is awe-filled shock of standing present to this destinal moment and the terror and wonder of assuming responsibility for saving God, transforming history, and being the presence we need to be, where we need to be and in the form we need to be; it is lying face down on the floor in humble, grateful obedience to the kairoitic moment. (How do we get this or its equivalent into our Daily Ritual? Do we need to bring a mat, like the Muslims? How do we get the whole Order prostrate before the radical, total, and unconditioned nature of our vocation? And stand present to the radical possibility of submission?)

9. II. PHYSICAL ABANDONMENT: the sense of leaping off the high dive, of willing one thing with your body, conquering the palsy of "if-fing" and "but-ting" and maybe and not yet, and with glorious abandon, breaking through the barricades that one's own fears set up, and the elation of living as one who has nothing to lose; this has to do with using one's body to take on the whole weight of the battle, and at the same time experiencing the strange glory of this.

10. III. EMBODIED BEING: everything in life, the times, the task, the order seems incredibly confusing, until there is a body on the line, prepared to do the ultimate deed; then amazing clarity happens; the chains are thrown away; the local Self is abandoned. When Death is posited in history unfearfully, one finds oneself beyond both the ideal self and the contraire self, with a permanent stake in The Other World, being God's being and creation. It is like a second marriage with being and the whole creation. It is the experience of the shining face of God. Then the question is "how do I put spirit into matter? One experiences the body dominated gently by the spirit, and impelled to the praise of being. Then the impulsion is to use everything to praise Being: it cannot be affirmed enough: it becomes a roar of praise: the lion's roar: we am! Public voice is not an imperative from some book, but the praise of God. The voice, the mouth, the backbone, arms, legs become an art form of expended declaration. The bored, laidback style just seems inappropriate. There is concern about mood and tone, and how they can be used to affirm Being appropriately. Profound presence is an art form of Being. And all authentic art is one more attempt to capture the riotous multifariousness of Being.

11. IV. ECSTATIC AT-HOMENESS: the characteristic mode here is a weird delight in the way things are, in the mundane givens of life. One feels at home with the times the way they are, people the way they are, one's spouse the way (s) he is, one's tasks the way they are, with computers, thunderstorms, running water, and the E.G. It is being given the heart of a child all over again. The best things in life do seem to be free. Life is good just as it is, not only as a belief but an experience of its delight when the blinkers are removed. One has nothing to defend anymore neither creeds, theologies, moralities, or models: one is free to be a co-creator in a great partnership with one's colleagues, both male and female. It is at this point that one's task seems to be simply defending the honor of God by making manifest the humanness that is at stake and the Mystery that is at stake in every situation.

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12. If, as one of our colleagues said recently, the undercurrents of the three arches of the Year of Order Council have to do with Repentance, Reconciliation, and Adoration, then there is a need for us to work on the spirit screen that will make profound sense out of our experience of the struggle of this year. Adoration is one link in the chain. We will be unable to maintain our ontological sanity before God, unless we learn all over again what it means to adore God. The Order: Ecumenical does many things, knows many things, has many faces, campaigns, operating principles and forms; but, finally, it is in the business of confession, praise, and dedication - a symbol of those who stand before, serve, and embody the One in the Cne. It is this that will allow us to be an unstoppable presence in the world we serve.