

Reflection for the 3rd Sunday of Easter, April 19th, 2015

by Ewelina Frackowiak

The disciples are startled and terrified. Jesus comes and says: look at me, experience me, touch me, remember what I told you when I was still with you! He appeals to senses and intellect - two ways through which we, human beings, know things. So the disciples know now that Jesus is not a ghost (he eats and has flesh like theirs), and his story is logically connected with some passages from the prophets and psalms. What is this knowledge good for? Well, for nothing yet. What follows the showing, touching and talking is the opening of disciples' minds by Jesus, opening of minds so they can understand.

Opening of minds – what does it mean? Certainly more than acquiring knowledge by intellect and senses. Let me look for an explanation, an explanation that will come from my insight, and experience and which you are more than welcome to examine against your insight, intellect, and experience. The Buddha said: “Believe nothing until you have experienced it and found it to be true...”<sup>1</sup>

So, opening of minds to understand. Let's call the result of it spiritual knowing in order to differentiate it with the other types of knowing that did not release the disciples from fear. John in the letter we have just heard in our second reading also differentiates between two types of knowing – false sense and true sense of knowing. Let's read again: “The way we may be sure that we know him [Jesus] is to keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar (...)” (1 John 2. 3-4). Spiritual knowing then goes hand in hand with action, spiritual knowing compels us to live out Jesus's commandment, which is the commandment to love one another.

---

<sup>1</sup> Quote from: <https://www.sonoma.edu/users/d/daniels/buddhpage.html>

Is this what happened – the disciples were empowered to love, recognized each other in the uniting light of love when Jesus opened their minds? We do not know for sure. What had happened must have been beyond the words of the evangelist, of words of anyone in fact. It must have been a mystical experience.

Each of us can ask oneself what the nature of spiritual knowing is because such knowing is accessible to all of us. It may also be different for each of us. I will characterize it in the spirit of the psychologist and peace activist Jorge Ferrer<sup>2</sup>: First, spiritual knowing is presential – “one knows X by virtue of being X”. (To think about it, how intimately we are invited to know God and each other in the Eucharist!) Second, spiritual knowing is transformative – it is an overcoming of narrow self-centeredness and thus a liberation that transforms both us and the world. (Wasn’t Jesus teaching transformative and still continue to be as such? Saint John says we ought to live as he lived – we need to transform, change, and challenge the status quo just as he did.) And finally, spiritual knowledge is enactive. Through it we are no longer alienated observers but direct participants in all life with which we now identify.

In my life, the moment in which spiritual knowledge replaced some false knowledge was the moment when I realized I have the right to love as anyone else has. It does not matter that I, a woman, fall in love with women, something intrinsic to what I am but still seen by the institutional Church as an objective disorder. Before I allowed myself to love, I had trusted in what the Church taught: that God does not want me to find a loving companion for life and that He gave me a special test, the test to live in celibacy. And believe me, my mind created many justifications that such teaching was right, and I became defending these ideas fiercely, avoiding anything that could challenge them. I could not even take a gay and lesbian newsletter in my hand out of fear that it would be a sin. I was living a life of mind, very rigid, very predictable, and as such close to awe and spontaneity. And then my mind, heart, and

---

<sup>2</sup> Ferrer N. Jorge, (2005). *Spiritual Knowing: A Participatory Understanding*, [in:] C. Clarke (ed.) “Ways of Knowing. Science and Mysticism Today”. Imprint Academic, UK.

soul opened. I began to let go of beliefs and to question what I had been taught. I realized I could not NOT love because that would be a spiritual suicide. I allowed myself to fall in love. I have been transformed by love ever since.

Spiritual knowing is not knowing of precepts, rules, and doctrines. It emerges from our participation in always dynamic spiritual power.<sup>3</sup> We are active participants in Jesus's vision when we nurture the love for God and for one another, and when we take responsibility for one another and all God's creation.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem, p. 2