

<https://cac.org/daily-meditations/the-wisdom-of-paradox/>

THE WISDOM OF PARADOX

WED 17 JAN 2024

All that is hidden, all that is plain, I have come to know, instructed by Wisdom.... Within her is a spirit intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, active, incisive, unsullied, lucid, invulnerable, benevolent, ... dependable, unperturbed, almighty, all-surveying.... She pervades and permeates all things. She is the untarnished mirror of God's active power.... She makes all things new. In each generation she passes into holy souls. —Wisdom 7:21–24, 26, 27

Richard Rohr believes wisdom arises from living with paradox.

Whenever I teach, I am not trying to change anyone's dogmas or beliefs, but only the mind with which they understand those dogmas. This new mind has everything to do with seeing and thinking paradoxically—grasping the truth of something that seems a contradiction. Great dogmas of the church are almost always totally paradoxical: Jesus is human and divine, Mary is virgin and mother, God is one and three, Eucharist is bread and Jesus. Because paradox undermines dual thinking at its root, the dualistic mind immediately attacks paradox as weak thinking or confusion, somehow separate from and inferior to hard logic. The modern phenomenon of fundamentalism displays an almost complete incapacity to deal with paradox, and shows how much we've regressed. Today the church is trying to catch up to what mystics have always known, and great scientists now teach as well.

The history of spirituality tells us we must learn to accept paradoxes, or we will never love anything or see it correctly. The above passage personifying Wisdom is an insightful description of how one sees paradoxically and contemplatively.

Each of us must learn to live with paradox, or we cannot live peacefully or happily even a single day of our lives. In fact, we must even learn to love paradox or we will never be wise, forgiving, or possessing the patience of good relationships. "Untarnished mirrors," as Wisdom says, receive the whole picture, which always includes the darkness, the light, and subtle shadings of light that make shape, form, colour, and texture beautiful.

Reality is paradoxical. If we're honest, everything is a clash of contradictions, and there is nothing on this created earth that is not a mixture at the same time of good and bad, helpful and unhelpful, endearing and maddening, living and dying. St. Augustine called this the "paschal mystery."

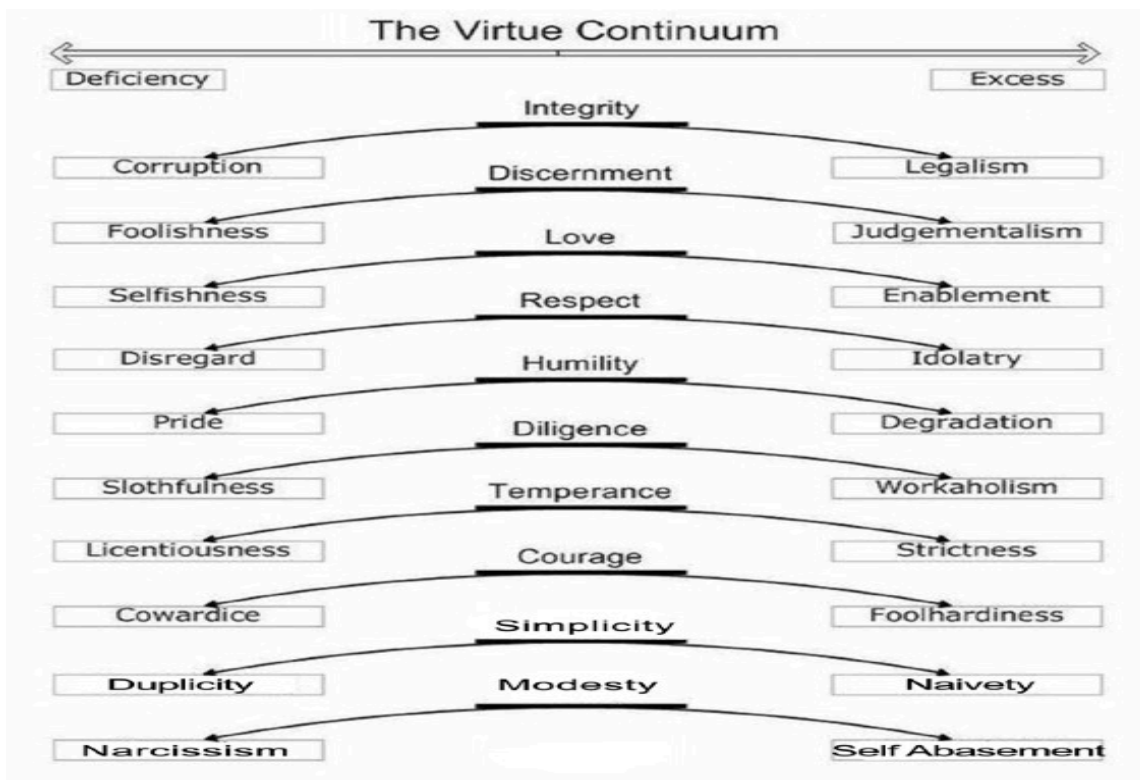
Western Christianity has tended to objectify paradoxes in dogmatic statements that demand mental agreement instead of any inner experience of the mystery revealed. At least we "worship" these paradoxes in the living collision of opposites we call Jesus. But this approach tends not to give people the underlying principle that Jesus, the Christ, has come to teach us about life and about ourselves. Jesus, as the icon of Christ consciousness (1 Corinthians 2:16), is the very template of total paradox: human yet divine, physical yet spiritual, killed yet alive, powerless yet powerful.

Jesus reveals the great cosmic mystery and calls us to see the same truth in ourselves and all of creation.

“We are all radically incomplete and need each other. Karl Barth, the great Protestant theologian, wrote of the Catholic ‘both / and.’ For example, Scripture and tradition, faith and works. He is said to have called it the ‘damned Catholic “And”’, ‘das verdammte katholische “Und”’. So when we listen to each other during the coming weeks and disagree, I pray we shall often say, ‘Yes, and.....’ Rather than ‘No’! That is the Synodal way. Of course, No is also sometimes necessary!”

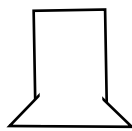
Tim Radcliff’s Pre Synodal Retreat - Meditation No:1 1st October 2023

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2023-10/retreat-day-1-radcliffe-first-meditation.html>



<https://qeducation.sg/general-paper/gp-resources/virtue-continuum/>

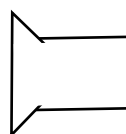
Spirituality
Spirituality



Mission
Mission



Shared Life
Community



"In this "magic hour" of (Religious) Marist Life, that develops between two lights, on the threshold, between what ceases to be and what is not yet, many of us, instead of agonising, feel the paradoxical force of rebirth that is more proper to transformation than mere continuity".

Sr Mercedes Navarro Puerto,
Mercedarian Sister of Charity

PARADOXES

a seemingly absurd or contradictory statement or proposition which when investigated may prove to be well founded or true.

The more you try to keep someone close, the further away you'll push them.

The more I am afraid to fail, the more likely I will fail.

The more I fail, the more likely I will succeed.

The more I try to impress others, the less impressed they'll be.

The more something scares me, the more I should probably do it.

The more I learn, the more I realise how little I know.

The more choices I have, the harder it is to decide.

The more honest I am about my faults, the more people will think I'm perfect.

Less is more

The search for happiness is the cause of unhappiness

The less I care about others, the less I care about myself.

People who can't trust, can't be trusted.

The more I am afraid of death, the less I'll be able to enjoy life

The more available something is, the less I will want it.

The best way to meet someone else is to not need to be with someone else.



The Paradox of Salvation & Discipleship

'For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.'

Mark 8:35

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, *"Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."*

Mark 9:35

"Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave to all."

Mark 10: 43-44

The Finite Game

Aim: To win
 Winners and Losers
 Limited time & boundaries
 External judging / umpiring

The Finite Mind

Avoid surprises
 Rigid & controlling
 The Past is finished
 The future is to be finished

The Past triumphs the future

ABSTRACTION
 POWER
 SCRIPTED
 THEATRICAL
 VISIBLE
 SERIOUS
 CONTRADICTIONARY

The Past is waiting to happen.
 Whoever plays towards a certain
 outcome desires a certain past.

Work for Finite players is about
 competing for a prized past and
 securing against an
 unpredictable future.

Freedom is a function of time.
 A Finite player puts play into time.

A powerful person is one who
 brings the past to an outcome,
 settling all its unresolved issues.

Power is finite in amount.

Titles are powerful in the arenas
 in which it was won in the past.



The Infinite Game

Aim: Keep the game alive
 Worthy rivals
 Timeless & Many horizons
 Internal evaluations

The Infinite Mind

Confront surprises
 Flexible & Vulnerable
 The Past is unfinished
 The future opens new possibilities...
 redefining the past.

The Future triumphs the past.

CONCRETE
 STRENGTH
 UNSCRIPTED
 DRAMATIC
 INVISIBLE
 PLAYFUL
 PARADOXICAL

The Past is the past, and the
 present will play towards the future
 which will redefine the past.

Work for the Infinite players is about
 engendering possibilities, moving
 towards a future which itself, has a
 future.

Time is a function of freedom.
 An Infinite player puts time into play.

A strong person is one who carries
 the past into the future, creating new
 possible meanings.

Strength cannot be measured

Names carry strength in the way it
 invite others to keep the play alive.

Grace strikes us
when we are in great pain
and restlessness.

It strikes us when we walk through the dark valley
of meaningless and empty life.

It strikes us when we feel that our separation
is deeper than usual,
because we have violated another life,
a life which we loved
or from which we were estranged.

It strikes us when our disgust for our own being,
our indifference, our weakness, our hostility
and our lack of direction and composure
have become intolerable to us.

It strikes us when year after year,
the longed for perfection of life does not appear,
when the old compulsions reign within us
as they have for decades,
when despair destroys all joy and courage.

Sometimes at that moment a wave of light
breaks into our darkness
and it is as though a voice were saying:

***“You are accepted.
You are accepted.”***

Accepted by that which is greater than you
and the name of which you do not know.

Do not ask for the name now;
perhaps you will find it later.

Do not try to do anything now;
perhaps later you will do much.

Do not seek for anything;
do not perform anything;
do not intend anything.

Simply accept the fact that you are accepted.

If that happens to us,
we experience Grace.

After such an experience
we may not be better than before
and we may not believe more than before.
But everything is transformed.

In that moment,
Grace conquers sin,
and reconciliation
bridges the gulf of estrangement.

And nothing is demanded
of this experience,
no religious or moral
or intellectual presupposition,
nothing but acceptance.

In the light of this grace
we perceive the power of grace
in our relation to others and to ourselves.
We experience the grace
of being able to look
frankly into the eyes of another,
the miraculous grace
of reunion of life with life;
we experience the grace
of understanding each others words.

Paul Tillich
‘The Shaking of Foundation’ p.63

