

QUIET JOURNEY - A Very Special Greek Word: Kenosis

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Church of the Advent, Colwood BC

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PHILIPPIANS

Do **nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.**

Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but *emptied* himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

THE CASE FOR GOD - Karen Armstrong

1. CREATIVITY

We are at our most creative when **we do not cling to our selfhood but are prepared to give ourselves away.**

2. THE GOAL IS PEACE

The Greeks would call this process kenosis, "emptying." **'Once you gave up the nervous craving to promote yourself, denigrate others, draw attention to your unique and special qualities, and ensure that you were first in the pecking order, you experienced an immense peace.**

3. DISCOVERING GOD

Jean-Jacques Rousseau the Genevan philosopher, educationist, and essayist ... believed . . . we should "listen to the "heart." For Rousseau the "heart" was not equivalent to emotion; it referred to a receptive attitude of silent waiting . . . Rousseau had no time for Christianity, whose God, he felt, had become a mere projection of human desires. He was looking for the "God" that transcended the old doctrines, a **deity that would be discovered by kenosis, compassion, and the humble contemplation of the majesty of the universe.**

4. ROLE OF RELIGION (Christianity)

(Karen Armstrong) Religion's task, closely allied to that of art, was to help us to (deal actively), peacefully, and even joyously with realities for which were no easy

explanations and problems that we could not solve: mortality, pain, grief, despair, and outrage at the injustice and cruelty. Over the centuries people in all cultures discovered that bringing their reasoning powers to the limit, stretching language to the end of its tether, and **living as selflessly and compassionately as possible, they experienced a transcendence that enabled them to affirm their suffering with serenity and courage.**

5. BELIEF = LIFESTYLE

Religious insight requires . . . a **compassionate lifestyle that enables us to break out of the prism of selfhood** . . . Experience proved that this was possible only if people cultivated a **receptive, listening attitude**, not unlike the way we approach art, music, or poetry.

THE VALUE OF QUIET - THE PRACTICE OF CENTERING PRAYER (Page)

6. The practice of silent prayer is rooted in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. Habakkuk counselled his congregation that, they should recognize that "the Lord is in his holy temple; **let all the earth keep silence before him!**" (Habakkuk 2:20)

7. In the 4th century the Christian monk John Cassian traveled to the deserts of Egypt where he uncovered a deep tradition of Christian spirituality and practice. Cassian found desert fathers and mothers who understood Jesus' instruction to "go into your room and shut the door" to mean we should "withdraw our hearts completely from the clatter of every thought and concern." This led to a way of "wordless prayer."

8. This discipline of "wordless prayer" has carried on as a deep, sometimes hidden stream in Christian practice to the present day. In the **over-stimulated culture** of the 21st century, the practice of "wordless prayer" is more essential than at any other time.

9. **A never failing awareness of God's presence is the deepest longing of the human heart.** This consciousness begins to emerge in the practitioner's life as we follow the discipline of Centering Prayer. As we rest daily in God's presence in silent prayer, we begin to discover that an awareness of God's presence permeates more and more of our lives. We find ourselves trusting in God's faithfulness in circumstances where we might previously have been tempted to panic, struggle for control, or fight back.

LISTENING, and INVITATION

The table of bread and wine is now made ready.
It is the table of company with Jesus
And with all those who love him.
It is the table of sharing with the poor of the world,
With whom Jesus identified himself.
It is the table of communion with the earth
In which Christ became incarnate.

So, come to this table,

You who have much faith
And you who would like to have more;
You who have been to this sacrament often,
And you who have not been for a long time;
You who have tried to follow Jesus,
And you who have failed.
Come.
It is Christ who invites us to meet him here.