

What Awakens You to the Love of God?

By Christine Sine



St. Teresa of Avila, "Remember: if you want to make progress on the path and ascend to the places you have longed for, the important thing is not to think much but to love much, and so to do whatever best awakens you to love."

Prayer is not about getting down on our knees to talk to God. Nor is it about praying for the needs of the world. It is about falling in love and staying in love with God as we converse with and interact with the One

who fills every fiber of our being.

What awakens us to the love of God which formed us, transforms us, sustains us and empowers us? What awakens us to the love of God so that we crave that intimate place of communion with the lover of our souls. Not just when we sit down in a place of retreat where we intercede for others but moment by moment of every day in the ordinary routines and activities of life?

This is the question that I think is at the heart of the gospels. Jesus whole life is about learning to love the God who is love. That is why James calls "love of God and love of neighbor" the royal law. That is why Jesus spent so much time drawing aside to quiet places to pray. That is why the disciples longed to learn how to pray as Jesus prayed, not in a distant hands-off relationship but in an intimate loving interaction that permeated his life and ministry. Learning to love someone means spending time in their presence, becoming familiar with their voice, gazing into their face. It means loving to stand in awe of what they have made, touching, tasting and relishing their love expressed through such creativity.

It also means learning to love what they love. To enter into a loving relationship with God means to desire what God loves - justice and mercy and compassion. It means that our hearts ache with the things that tear God's heart apart - sin and disease and injustice. Form the fullness of our experience of God's love we are able to love others. The outpouring of God's love into the lives of others is I believe one of the most profound expressions of prayer that there can be.

So what awakens you to the love of God?