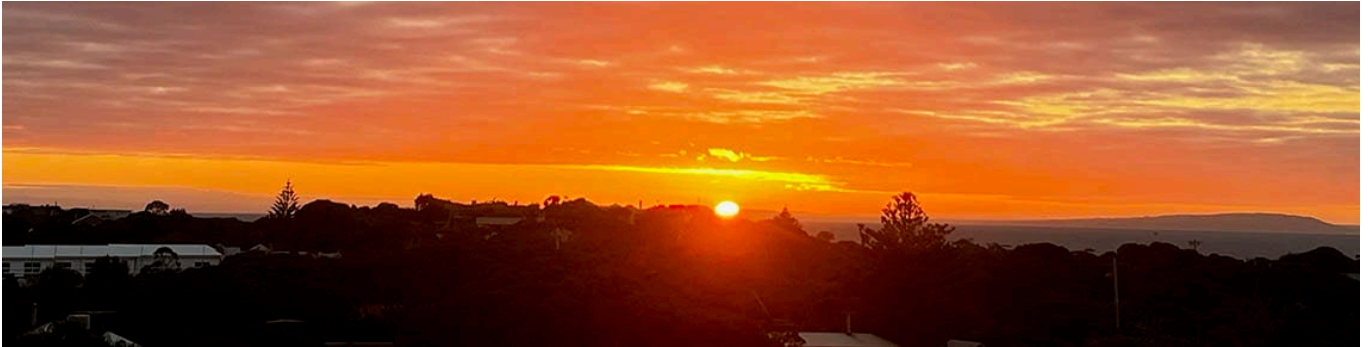


Becoming One

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In the stillness, before morning breaks and the world's noise begins, we awaken to a new day and to a field of quiet within and around us. If we stay with this quiet we open into a silent land of peace, depth and possibility that forever calls us onwards. This silence is the primordial SILENCE that existed before words were ever spoken—the SILENCE of the unknowable, the unmanifest, the unspeakable—the sheer uncreated being that solicits us as it gathers us into itself. This SILENCE wraps us round and penetrates our being with a sense of wholeness... yet with longing for some unseen "more". Such is the silence of unbroken wholeness—that unified field that holds all distinctions and difference in a oneness and 'belovedness' that is the deepest Ground of all existence.

This underlying oneness existed before 'other' ever came to be. It was present before 'twoness' and separation and oppositional forces emerged in our world. It is still with us now—unseen, but mysteriously sensed by those alert to recognise it. Mystics know it well and are open to the gentle drawing of the silent flow of its magnetic call. It is that oneness that we ourselves touch in contemplation, and perhaps are struggling to find in all of life's busy, sometimes frenetic occupations. Once recognised, we find that it is a 'homely', welcoming, and utterly peaceful 'presence' around us...and in us.

The CEN focus for this year is "PEACE—GROWING THE FIELD". The SILENCE just described evokes that PEACE. Such peace is not something 'worked at' to make happen. It is not something achieved, but rather something discovered or awakened to present within us as already, both individually and collectively. Beyond and prior to the "let there be..." of creation was infinite Mystery...silent Presence.



The myriad divisions, conflicts, injustices and political 'posturings' seen in our world today can be seen through this lens as thresholds of birth. It is the birth of an entirely new consciousness pushing upwards from within the collective—a communion of the One and the Many—longing to 'be incarnated' or embodied outwardly. Could this bring the peace—the shalom with which Jesus greets the post-resurrection disciples in the seemingly random encounters after he is risen from the dead?

In his book *"Rediscovering the Divine"* Cyprian Consiglio OSB Cam unpacks a prior work of Bruno Barnhard OSB Cam, *"The Second Simplicity"*, by discussing 'four poles or dimensions that manifest themselves out of the unitive experience of many ancient religious traditions'ⁱ and these parallel our Christian unitive experience. Barnhart named these four dimensions as: 'Silence, Word, Music, and Dance'.

The Silence is the great primordial SILENCE of the unknowable, the unmanifest, the Creator, the Source or Father/Mother of all being. The WORD is the visible embodiment of the unmanifest Silence—the Son. The MUSIC is the energy and power of Spirit that fires and enables the pouring out of "unitive Light that draws everything together within itself"ⁱⁱ...a "fullness in which a plurality of meanings live together".ⁱⁱⁱ Spirit often



communicates through intuition, musical, poetic and artistic creativity that speak at levels beyond the physical, creating relationship and greater aliveness. Finally, the DANCE or fourth dimension engages that which has been pushed into the shadow—the body, the feminine, the earth and nature itself—drawing these into the Dance of the whole. When ‘shadow’ and all that lies unacknowledged in it is drawn into the whole and affirmed as an important and necessary part

of it, then the greater whole is complete. Then the utter simplicity of the hidden wholeness can arise and becomes evident...then we can truly DANCE.

The backdrop of these four dimensions throws light on what we desire to be and do for ourselves and our world. Bede Griffiths expresses it as our call today being *“to recover unity beyond duality as our birthright,”* and he suggests that this *“alone can answer the deepest needs of the world today.”*^{iv} We can help recover this “unity beyond duality” as we sit in contemplation both alone and together.

Elsewhere Thomas Merton speaks of the contemplative life as *“primarily a life of unity”* and that *“a contemplative is one who has transcended divisions to reach a unity beyond division.”*^v This is the unity prior to duality that exists at the core of ourselves and existence itself. Reaching out to and dwelling in this primordial unity—the oneness of the ancient SILENCE—draws all duality, difference and division back to their origins and joins the lost fragments to their whole. It is a work of healing and compassionate holding through Love.

As we sit in silent contemplation together at 4.00 pm, we are entering this union beyond division. We are entering the DANCE of all being and helping to reunite it with its essence. In this we sense the MUSIC of that fiery energy that bursts outwards from within this essence to fill the world and all creation with its much sought after purpose and potential. As we DANCE to this deep inner MUSIC of all life, we sense ‘incarnation’—embodiment... unspoken WORD becoming manifest beyond visual detection. It arises out of the labour pains of the violence and suffering all around us. And we want to draw this suffering into the great Dance of all creation as Word... revealing its inner truth. That which rises to view is the essential simplicity of the SILENCE. It is the GROUND of all life and being, longing for us to come home to the ONENESS from which we have emerged. But now we can bring with us the myriad and diverse aspects of life, ways of being and seeing, expressions of what it means to be fully alive and bursting with our full potential. This diversity becomes a unity in difference that is rich and full and wholly all that it can be.

We come home to Jesus’ words in John’s gospel: “Father... [Source, Life-giver, Creator] may they be ONE as we are ONE...”

Let us continue our faithful midwifing of this consciousness as we sit in contemplation together and hold the divided, suffering world in the GREAT UNDERLYING SILENCE that HOLDS, embraces and fulfills us. Let us *become* the Oneness that we are!

ⁱ Cyprian Consiglio, *“Rediscovering the Divine”*, Orbis Books, NY. 2023

ⁱⁱ Bruno Barnhart, *The Second Simplicity*, Paulist Press, NY. 1999, p. 127

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid p.126

^{iv} Bede Griffiths, *“New Creation in Christ”*. Templegate Publishers, US 1994. p. 49-50

^v Thomas Merton, *“New Seeds of Contemplation”*, Shambhala Publications, 2003 p. 291-2