

Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

August 29, 2021

A Spiritual Reflection

From the Pastor's Desktop

Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,



THOU HAST MADE ME ENDLESS

"Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life. This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dales, and hast breathed through it melodies eternally new. At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable. Thy infinite gifts come to me only on these very small hands of mine. Ages pass, and still thou pourest, and still there is room to fill."

From *Gitanjali* by Rabindranath Tagore,
Poet from India, Nobel Laureate for Literature in 1913

Reflection: God's infinity is an endless panorama against which the human finiteness is not even a speck. God's infinity could be viewed from space and time. In terms of space, He is limitless; in terms of time, He is eternal. God's infinity can also be applied to every form of perfection, such as truth, beauty, goodness, power, wisdom, happiness, and love. All these qualities that we experience in a finite manner in our lives flow from their infiniteness residing in God.

God's infinity, therefore, is not only an abstract, transcendental reality. It's a concrete, immanent reality as well, accessible to the human beings. God shares His infinity with us by making us participate in His perfection. In that sense, as Tagore sings, we have been made endless, limitless, eternal, and infinite. God has made us in His own image and likeness. We have been made the children of God. We have been drawn into the heart of God's infinity because of what Christ has done with and for us, in taking on our nature. By God-with-Us becoming one with us, eternity has met our time; infinity has met our finiteness.

Tagore employs several haunting images to help us deepen our awareness of being eternal on account of God's continuous, dynamic interaction with us in a loving relationship. We are a frail vessel God empties again and again and fills it ever with new life. God is the potter and we are the clay (Jer. 18:6; Is 64:8). He is the one who has fashioned us into who we are. God has searched us and known us, and knit us together in our mother's womb (Ps. 139). We are the earthen vessels filled with God's power (2 Cor. 4:7-10). Sadly, we keep filling ourselves often times with things that don't belong in this frail, fragile vessel. With these things exerting undue pressure on the frailty of the vessel, there is a danger of the vessel breaking and collapsing. That is why God keeps emptying this vessel, if we but allow him. Our conversion implies the emptying of the vessel. "If you want to follow me, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me," says Jesus. "If you want to be perfect, go sell everything you have, come, follow me." Our "freedoms from" (emptying) will lead us to "freedoms for" (filling).

Tagore sees our life not only as a frail vessel but also as a little flute of a reed. When God plays the flute, everything comes into existence and finds fulfillment. We exist by participating in the eternal music God makes for the world's existence and sustenance. By emptying us of our old, tedious melodies, God fills us with new ones that enthrall us. Further, each one of us is made in the manner of a flute. The flute is created by being emptied; the reed has to be hollowed out. However painful this process may be for the bamboo, it is the only way if it has to produce life-giving music. The bamboo has to become lighter by shedding part of itself in order to become the flute. Only then God can carry the flute over hills and dales, breathing through it eternally new melodies. When we were created, God breathed into us by giving us His own spirit. Our breath is the breath of God Himself. In our breathing is mingled God's own breath. God continues to breathe through us to renew and refresh us and to make us produce music to fill the world with beauty and joy.

Tagore's symbols continue to work magic: while death is notorious for touching us mortally, God touches us immortally, making our little hearts lose their limits in joy and burst out in an inexpressible song. Our hearts are little no more because of God's healing and magical touch, which makes us transcend our finiteness and enter the limitlessness of God. Not only our hearts, but our hands are little as well. On our tiny hands God pours His infinite gifts age after age and still there is more room in our hands for His gifts to rest. Our small hands are made to carry the eternal gifts of God for eternity! Our little hearts and our tiny hands are fashioned by God to bear His infinite gifts and blessings.

Action: If you are indeed a vessel that God fills with new life and a flute He fills with enchanting melody, will you help Him in our self-emptying process? Drop the obsession and constant preoccupation with self and all its manifestations and attachments, making space for God to fill your life. Empty your heart and hands of clinging to people and things so that you are receptive to God's love as expressed in the love of people. Through selfless, human love, you will be led into the sanctuary of God's infinite and eternal love, but not before you are hollowed out.

Your Friend & Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota