



Dying to Live

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Abstract: Christians live the Easter every day. They are the Easter people. Therefore, dying to live has to be our discipleship. Nancy relates what is intact/ safe to what is dead. We cannot be choosing safety, security, stability ... but have the challenge to choose the resurrection that is lived in the emancipative dance of dying to live. Literally, when we die to live, we come close to the dynamic play of the rhythm of resurrection that is eventing in our world.

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There is an untouchable section that is considered sacred in all religions. Derrida says that religion cannot be disassociated from its own discourse of salvation. That is to save, be safe and

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save oneself. To save itself is the thing of any religion. It becomes materialised as being uncontaminated or untainted or untouched and therefore holy, sacred and sound. Derrida sees that every organized religion has what he calls auto-immunity that keeps it intact or safe. Religion has a way of saving itself before saving its subjects. Actually, auto-immunity is only a phantasm. It is the diehard conservatives that conserve and keep safe and fight the vulnerable sides of religion from harming it and maintain its sacrosanctity. It is they who are dying (thirsting) to let their faith live untainted by anything that they deem as adulteration that poses the dangers of death of their religion. But from the Christian point of view, the sacred has to be protected from this drive for protection as it is only in dying that one saves oneself. Jesus taught that he who tries to save himself will lose his life (Mt. 16; 25). Unless a grain of wheat dies it cannot bear fruit (Jn. 12:24). This is why religion does have to protect itself from its own drive to security, protection and safety. We may have to think about how institutionalized religions/ faiths survive as untouchables, untouched and intact and therefore safe and therefore holy. Therefore, religions touch without letting be touched. Touch can be contaminating. hence, being untouched is a way of constructing sacrosanctity. This is why more often than not religion has become untouchable touching its subjects.

Touchable Touching of Jesus

Derrida writes about the touchable touching of Jesus. Derrida says, “salvation saves by touching, and saviour, the one who touches is touched: saved, safe, unscathed, touched by grace”. Jesus the saviour is not only touching but he is being touched too. To him to save/heal is to touch and be touched. He also touched without touching as in the case of the lady that touched him (Mk.5:21-34). This is not touching that is touching without letting be touched as we see in the case of institutionalised religions. It is touching without touching. Derrida thinks that often organized religions become touch-me-not like Jesus in the Gospel of John where for a moment Jesus became an untouchable (Jn 20:17). ‘The risen Jesus

says 'touch me not' to Mary Magdalene when she recognised him. Thus, what started as touching the untouchables for Derrida became frozen and transformed as untouchable touching without being touched. This is his deconstructive critique of Christianity.

There may be truth in what Derrida has to say about organized religions yet we have to pay attention to his friend and disciple Jean Luc Nancy who describes Derrida's position as rabbinical scepticism. While discussing Christ's relation to touching, Nancy arrives at a new interpretation of resurrection. Nancy states that Christianity is a religion of touch and the incident

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that Derrida mentions is only an exception. He says it is the only time when Christ does not want to be touched or held back. This is because He says Christ does not cease to depart. Christ is not present in the usual sense but is now in a condition of departure and therefore has become untouchable and inaccessible to touch. This means Jesus Christ has assumed the state of being between and beyond this life. He is now in the mode of departure which is also a mode of arrival from another point of view. He is now of the order of arrival and departure. This is why there are the appearances of resurrection to the Disciple where he touches them and allows them to touch him. We are faced with a point where there is a demand to touch him is made by the absent Thomas who does not touch but bows down in faith when he gets his opportunity (Jn 20: 24-29).

Continuous Death to Death

Nancy sees another important side in Christ's request not to touch him. He holds that Christ says, 'don't touch me because I am touching you and this touch is such that it holds you at a distance. This is so in his view because resurrection is not a return to life. It is not a simple resuscitation. He thinks of resurrection as a reconfiguration of death and the dying. It is the continuous death of the powers of death. It is a continuous dying that becomes a living. This is how it is a continuous departure and also arrival. The resurrected Christ continues renewing the world by letting the forces of death die so that new life may come. It belongs to the logic of departure and arrival. To understand it we have to leave our habitual thinking through the dichotomy of death and life. We have to think both death and life together. Death continues in the risen Christ. It is only death that makes us understand what is resurrection. Outside death, there is no meaning of resurrection.

Conclusion

Resurrection in this way is a present and is a continuous event and not one spectacular onetime event of the past. The event of the past is still eventing and continues in the same power and intensity. Therefore, salvation is a dynamic and continuous event. It is not dead and belongs to the past. It is present and active. This is why

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Derrida is right in his critique of organized religion that in his opinion has become untouchable and wants to touch without letting be touched. Such a religion is outside the economy of dying to live. Such religions have become dead and do not allow the rhythm of dying to live to touch them but embrace what may be called protection from dying. This is why we have the challenge to embrace the dynamism of the Paschal Mystery. It is eventing with the same intensity and power today as on the first Easter day. We

live the Easter every day. St. Pope John Paul II taught us that we are the Easter people. Therefore, dying to live has to be our discipleship. Nancy relates what is intact/ safe to what is dead. We cannot be choosing safety, security, stability ... but have the challenge to choose the resurrection that is lived in the emancipative dance of dying to live. Literally, when we die to live, we come close to the dynamic play of the rhythm of resurrection that is eventing in our world.



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