

I'd like to impress you with my knowledge of quantum physics but since that's not possible I'd like to quote from an article in yesterday's Guardian Saturday Review instead supporting the 'relational interpretation of quantum mechanics'

*'reality is not a collection of things, it's a network of processes.....*

*We understand reality better if we think of it in terms of interactions not individuals'*

( page 67 Carla Ravelli)

This doesn't mean that individuals no longer matter or that things no longer exist, but that they can only exist in relation. That who and what they are depends not on themselves only – instead it's our interactions that make us who we are. After a while this begins to seem rather obvious -it's what history is all about, or all it's different interpretations, and Plato was onto it years ago

*'Anything which possesses any sort of power to affect another, or to be affected by another, if only for a single moment, however trifling the cause and however slight the effect, has real existence; and I hold that the definition of being is simply action.'* ( ibid)

And the Catholic theologian Karl Rahner said something like ' who we are doesn't stop at the skin' - it's what Christianity is also keen to promote, as we see in today's readings – the book of Wisdom realising that our knowledge of earthly things is incomplete, that we need to be saved from our limitations by a source beyond ourselves, by an interaction with what we might otherwise call God and the psalm also echoes our inadequacy in this respect

*' make us know the shortness of life, that we may gain wisdom of heart'*

And Paul's letter to Philemon is all about relationship and its re-ordering in Christ – he returns his beloved run-away slave Onesimus to his rightful owner, not necessarily with a view to releasing him from slavery, but with a view to persuading Philemon that he and his slave can now enjoy a relationship which transcends that of simply master and slave – they are one in Christ, friends in a relationship which goes far beyond any human ordering of society. This of course is also obviously the thrust of the opening lines of today's gospel reading – it's not to disown family ties ' father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters' but to place them in a wider perspective, in the wider perspective one might say of God's love for us all, and indeed for everything- a quantum leap, a quantum understanding. Far from saying nothing matters except this – isolating God in this respect – it says everything matters because all is all in God – everything connected. So when we begin to build a tower – to construct anything with our lives it will fail, have no meaning, unless related to this wider vision, to this wider reality, to what reality is – a totality of connections, including God. Discovering that the king you wish to attack has a much larger army is to challenge one's own ego- centricity one's own pride in being this great person vis a vis everyone else. It's a lesson in relatedness – we are not the be all and end all of everything. That of course is a lesson for Christianity too- and why Pope Francis (it's that man again )deplores any approach which distances us from our neighbour– whether it be class or intellect or race or ideology. No, we must know the smell of the sheep, be close to those who suffer, be one with the reality that affects us all. Or to echo the Jesuit priest and scientist Teilhard de Chardin once again

*' Nothing here below is profane for those with the eyes to see'.*

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