

One of the reasons we begin and end the day with prayer is not so that we can get on with the rest of the day without prayer but so that the rest of the day becomes prayer, it's a question not of quantity – the number of prayers said – or of compartmentalisation – this is the time for prayer and this is not- but of becoming prayer ourselves, or rather allowing the prayer that we are to be realised, made real. This sounds a bit abstract in the same way perhaps that talking about being spiritual can sound abstract, unreal, something different and above our bodily existence, but like opposing prayer to the rest of what we do, and are, it's a false opposition, an attempt to compartmentalise in order to understand. But real knowledge doesn't work that way because everything is connected, or in the words of George Monbiot with our education system in view

*'the exam system creates artificial borders, fiercely patrolled, between academic subjects. There are no such boundaries in nature. If our interdisciplinary thinking is weak, if we keep failing to see the bigger picture, it is partly because we have been trained so brutally to compartmentalise. (Guardian Journal 8.7.23).*

This I would suggest is the issue at the heart of the tussle in the gospels, and elsewhere, between the Law and the Spirit – Jesus is not trying to keep them in separate compartments but to show how they flow into one another, how prayer and what we do and are during the rest of the day are one. And this may also make sense of that otherwise seemingly abstract expression in today's gospel passage

*'Everything has been entrusted to me by my father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.*

If we can just step back from the gendered language for a moment we might be able to see that this is an invitation into a relationship which covers or includes everything. This is the bigger picture which Jesus invites us into and we in a sense respond to when we say the Our Father, when we acknowledge God as Our Father too. We say this not in order to become infants again but to share with Jesus the yoke of being God's children, that is to allow Jesus, to allow God, to not only accompany us through the burden of each day, but to lighten the burden by sharing the same yoke. The burden of each day may be no different as a Christian – we face the same issues as everyone else- but we do not carry them alone.

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