

We have a group which has been meeting for ten years now in which we allow both spiritual and psychoanalytic language to mingle, to inform one another, to be spoken without embarrassment or stricture in each others presence. And it's really an attempt to acknowledge that the division between the two is a false one, that we are spiritual creatures as much as we are physical, or in any other way you would want to describe us, and that God exists for all of us, even if one cannot ascribe this experience to God. So in a similar way to exploring often hidden and unspoken emotional depths it's a way of exploring these in terms of our spiritual depths also – that background hum that hints at the very beginnings of our creation and goes some way to explaining why we are here and what we are for. It's is sort of baptism we all have to undergo if we are to find meaning, purpose, fulfilment – and baptism is immediately symbolic of flow or process or movement, of a current of understanding which we enter and carries us along; as much something we accede to as is done to us. So Jesus enters this flow and is anointed by it as well as being Christed or anointed for it – he enters the flow of creation which has always been intended to carry us to God or, better, to fulfil our intention as God's creation, as children of God. And flow also signifies dying and rising, that continual movement we experience every day which will eventually carry us through death. Christ then is anointed today for both life and mission, and death. So it's not about avoiding the pain of being fully alive but of entering life fully with all its pain and joy; that experience of change which challenges us every day; that experience of growing to perfection which is not ours to ultimately control. Indeed, it can seem at times to be entirely regressive – I'm worse now than when I started. But if the process, if the anointing is true, then God is at work in us in ways which are often only known by hindsight or guessed at by others. What seems like a death may be a resurrection. The ambivalence then of water or the fire of the Holy Spirit. It's important though to wait on this and not to judge too soon whether what we understand as success or failure is God's measure of success or failure too, to wait indeed for God to be revealed in what we might think of as total failure – our defeat by various enemies: the attrition of poverty, disease, low intelligence. The background hum will still be there, but we will still need an anointing to find it. Jesus takes on this anointing so that we too may be found – all of us, every one, no exceptions.

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