

# Heart Spirituality





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Functional Adult

KNOW ABOUT many things

|  |                     |   |           |   |  |
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Mature persons are **generative**. That is, they are able to spend their life in creative communion which is life-giving both to themselves and to those with whom they relate.

To be generative, a person must have experienced **intimacy**: the kind of loving and being loved which is experienced as being the fruit of being deeply known and accepted by another whom we intimately know and accept.

To be truly intimate one must have a sense of one's personal **identity**: a sense of self that is experienced as being affirmed by another who is significant to us.

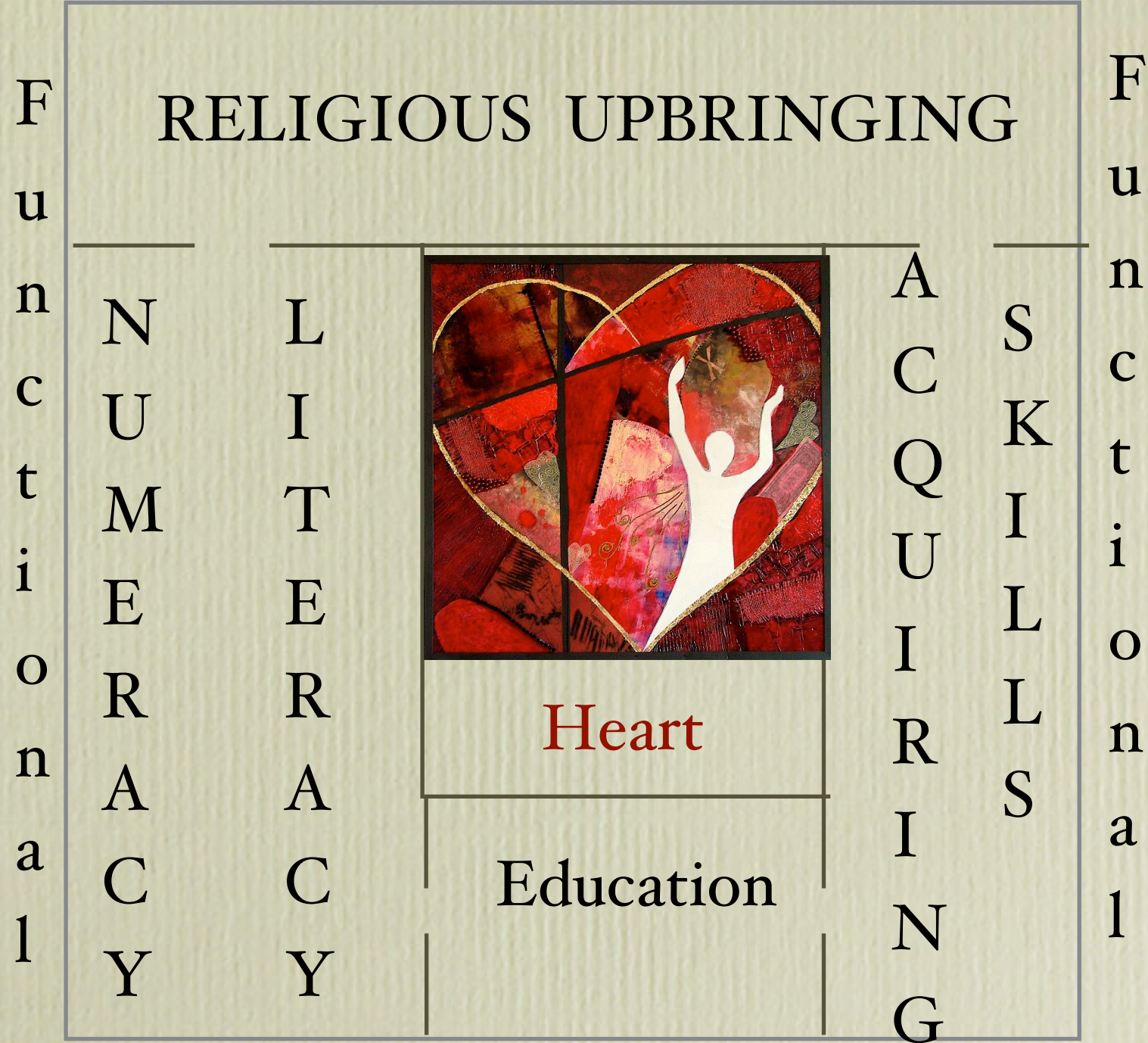


‘If only you knew the gift of God ... a spring of life-giving water,  
welling up to eternal life’ (John 4:10,14)



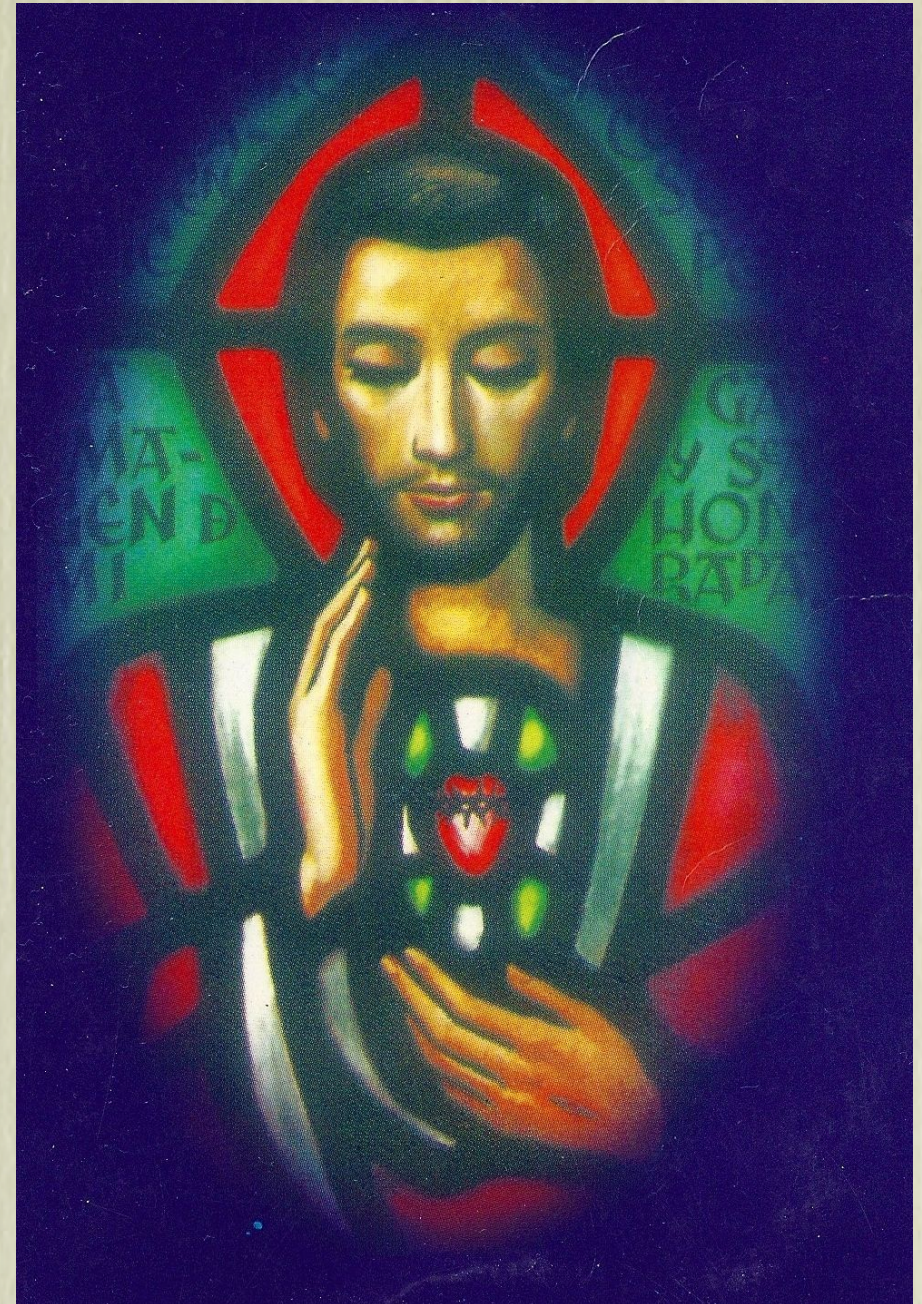


KNOW





Spirituality of the heart focuses attention on one's own heart as one with the heart of Jesus, who offers us his communion with the Heart of God.





To know is to experience myself  
as being in communion with God.  
Let us examine this in four steps.

Encounter

Intimacy

Conversion

Mission



## I. Encounter

I can **know about** God

[Mysterious Presence  
holding everything in  
existence, and in communion]

- from nature
- from people & events
- from movements of thought & feeling
- from words spoken & written
- from works of art



Vincent van Gogh

They reveal something of the truth,  
beauty & goodness of the transcendent & mysterious God



## I. Encounter

If I go to my heart I can experience communion with [know] God

- in nature



- in people & events
- in movements of thought & feeling
- in words spoken & written
- in works of art



Vincent van Gogh



I can know about God

- from the Vedas & Upanishads
- from the sayings of Confucius
- from the sayings of Gautama the Buddha
- from the oracles of the Hebrew Scriptures
- from the Moslem Qur'an
- from the mystics, poets, artists of all cultures

This reading can draw me to my heart where  
I experience myself in communion with  
God.





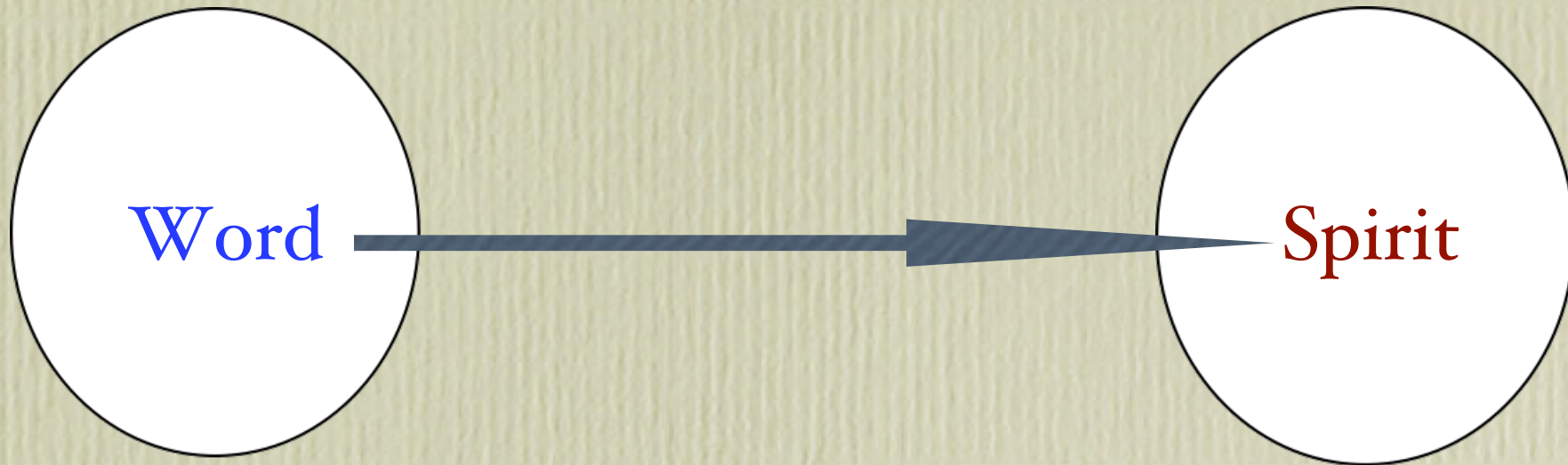
Learning about Jesus I can come to **know about** the God he knew



I can know that Jesus lives in my heart.  
We are one in our communion with God.  
In Heart-Prayer (“Go into that secret place”)  
we experience this communion.



Revelation



Numinous

Mystical

Heart

speaks to

Heart

Experience of being one: Heart **in** heart



## 2. Intimacy

We long for a deeper, more intimate encounter with God: we long to experience God's love as personal, unconditional and faithful. If we are to find meaning and happiness on earth, the greatest human need is to learn to believe in God's love for us and to allow God's love to transform our lives. Human hearts hunger for unconditional love; everything and everyone else will eventually leave us unsatisfied.





‘God’s love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us’(Romans 5:5)

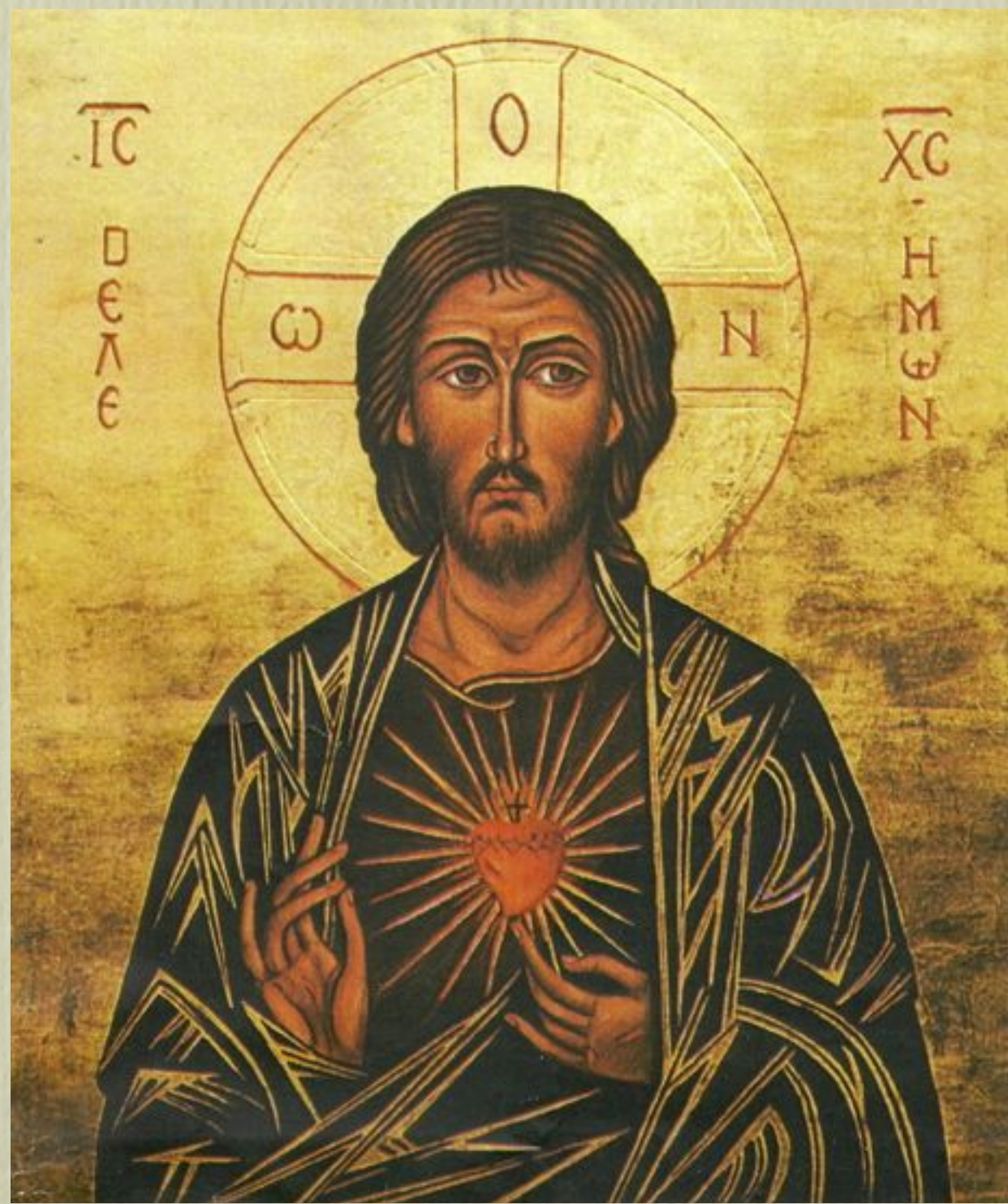
Spirit  
Heart



Living the spirituality of the heart is called following the way of the heart. This helps us experience the compassionate love of God as revealed in Jesus, symbolised by His pierced heart.









*‘God proves God’s love for us in that while we still were sinners  
Christ died for us’(Romans 5:8).*

*‘If we are unfaithful, God remains faithful.  
God cannot deny God’s Self(2 Timothy 2:13)*

*‘We have come to know and we believe the love God has for us. God is  
love, and **those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.**’  
(1 John 4:16).*



### 3. Conversion



Panel of the Holy Door St Peter's Basilica, Rome



As we experience God's personal, unconditional and faithful love, we are moved to let go of whatever might block our relationship with God.

This letting go will help us grow in all of our relationships.

We are freed to allow God to change our hearts.

Spirituality of the Heart speaks of the necessity of turning away from anything that limits our capacity to love and be loved.



Books and retreats may bring about an awareness of the possibility of change, but real change happens in life.

We can be healed only by becoming engaged with our own life, and this includes experiencing loss, anger, ambiguity, disappointment and sadness.

Fear or guilt might serve as a wake-up call, but after that they are counter-productive.



Spirituality of the heart teaches us to open our hearts to God.

The focus is on our willingness to let God take away anything that is destructive in us and in our relationship with others, anything we cling to too tightly.

Letting go, making space, includes a challenge to being prepared to wait for God's action within our lives. Being patient is the beginning of our allowing God's love to heal and transform us.



## 4. Mission

I know I am an expression of God.

So is everything and everyone.

I want my union with God to affect all of my relationships. I want to share with others the experience of intimacy and conversion, by words and actions.

I want to know my communion with everything.







‘From the Heart of Jesus  
pierced on Calvary, I see a  
new world coming forth –  
a great and life-giving  
world, inspired by love and  
mercy: a world which the  
Church must perpetuate  
on the whole earth.’

(Jules Chevalier.

*The Sacred Heart* 1900)



‘Jesus went up on the mountain,  
and called to him those he desired;  
and they came to him.  
And he appointed twelve,  
to be with him,  
and to be sent out’(Mark 3:13-14)



Sharing our story gives the message of Jesus flesh today.  
The focus is on Jesus, and what He has done,  
so that we might remember Jesus and be grateful to Him.

We will share with others our faith, hope and love,  
we will share our communion.

Sharing is a gift. It is freely given and received if one wishes to do so. We need to look at Jesus' relationships and teachings to learn what sharing in a relationship truly is. In focusing on Jesus, we are more open to the desire to share our faith, hope, love and our personal story with others.





- ‘I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already’ (Luke 12:49).
- ‘I am in the Father and you are in me and I in you’ (John 14:20).
- ‘I pray that they will be one as we are one, with me in them and you in me’ (John 17:21).



Teilhard de Chardin SJ (1881-1955)

‘The evolution of chastity’ 1934

‘Some day,  
after harnessing space,  
the winds,  
the tides  
and gravitation,

We shall harness for God  
the energies of Love.

And then,  
for the second time in the history of the world,  
we shall have discovered fire.’



## What happens when we let God love us?

- We come to know that God's power is the power of self-giving love.

We come to recognise God's compassionate presence with us.

- instead of depending on our will power, we are willing to 'let go and let God' – to depend on God who is constantly with us.
- instead of asking God to do things for us we will find ourselves doing things with God. We will also discover that we no longer want God to solve the difficulties in our lives because we will come to know God as the companion and friend who journeys with us throughout our life's journey and in whose loving embrace we can rest secure.



- we no longer try to be perfect, which is impossible at any rate, but we accept our incompleteness, our limitations and weakness as they are accepted by God.
- we find that we move from trying to control our lives to leaving ourself in God's hands and growing in trust and surrender.
- we concentrate less on our agenda and are more present to the moment and live in gratitude for what we receive in each moment.
- we move out of our isolation into the experience of community.
- finally we no longer perceive God as distant :  
‘In God we live and move and have our being’ (Acts 17:28).



John 5:1-3      A guided meditation (drawing on Anthony de Mello SJ)

Imagine the pool ... the five covered walk-ways ... the surroundings ...  
What kind of place is it? Clean or dirty? ... Large or small?  
Notice the architecture ... the weather.

Now let the whole scene come to life: See the people near the pool.  
How many people are there? ... What sort of people?  
How are they dressed? ... What are they doing? ...  
What kind of illness are they suffering from? ...  
What are they saying? ... What are they doing?

It is not enough for you to observe the whole scene from the outside,  
as if it were a movie on a screen. You must participate in it.

What are you doing there? ... Why have you come to this place?

What are your feelings as you survey the scene and watch these people? ..

What are you doing? ... Do you speak to anyone? ... To whom? ...



- Now notice the sick man of whom the gospel passage speaks.  
Where in the crowd is he? ... How is he dressed? ...  
Is there anyone with him? ... Walk up to him and speak with him ...  
What do you say to him? ... What is his reply? ...  
Spend some time getting as many details of his life  
and his person as possible ...  
What sort of an impression does he make on you? ...  
What are your feelings while you converse with him? ...
- As you are speaking with him you notice, out of the corner  
of your eye, that Jesus has entered this place ... Watch all his actions  
and movements ... Where does he go? ... How does he act? ...  
What do you think he is feeling? ...



He is now coming up towards you and the sick man ...

What are you feeling now? ... You step aside when you realise that he wants to talk to the sick man.

What is Jesus saying to the man? What does the man answer? ...

Listen to the whole dialogue.

Fill in the sketchy account of the gospel ...

Dwell especially on Jesus' question:

'Do you want to be made well?'

Now listen to Jesus' command as he tells the man to get up and walk.

The first reaction of the man ... his attempt to get up ... the miracle! ...

Notice the reactions of the man ... Notice Jesus' reaction ...

and your own ...



Jesus now turns to you. He engages you in conversation.  
Talk to him about the miracle that has just taken place...

Is there any sickness that you are suffering from?  
physical, emotional, spiritual? ... Speak to Jesus about it...

What does Jesus have to say? ..Listen to his words to you:  
'Do you want to be made well?'

Do you really mean what you say when you asked to be cured? ...  
Are you ready to take all the consequences of a cure? ...

You have now arrived at a moment of grace.  
Do you have the faith that Jesus can cure you  
and that he means to cure you? ...  
Do you have the trust that this will happen  
as a result of the faith of the whole group here?



Listen to his mighty words as he pronounces the words of healing over you, or lays his hands on you. What are you feeling? ...

Are you certain that these words you have heard are going to have an effect on you, in fact have already had their effect on you, even though you may perceive nothing tangible at the moment?

Spend a while now in quiet prayer in communion with Jesus.



Through Heart Spirituality, we are encouraged to encounter and experience God's compassionate and healing love.

As we meditate on the life of Jesus, we will experience his companionship, his compassion and mercy now. He initiates the healing process. He empowers us to forgive. He restores relationships. He empowers us to the new ministry of forgiveness and reconciliation.





I am with you





I am with you on the journey

© Kathy Sherman csj

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I am with you on the journey  
and I will never leave you





I am with you on the journey  
always with you







I am with you on the journey  
and I will never leave you.





I am with you on the journey,  
always with you.

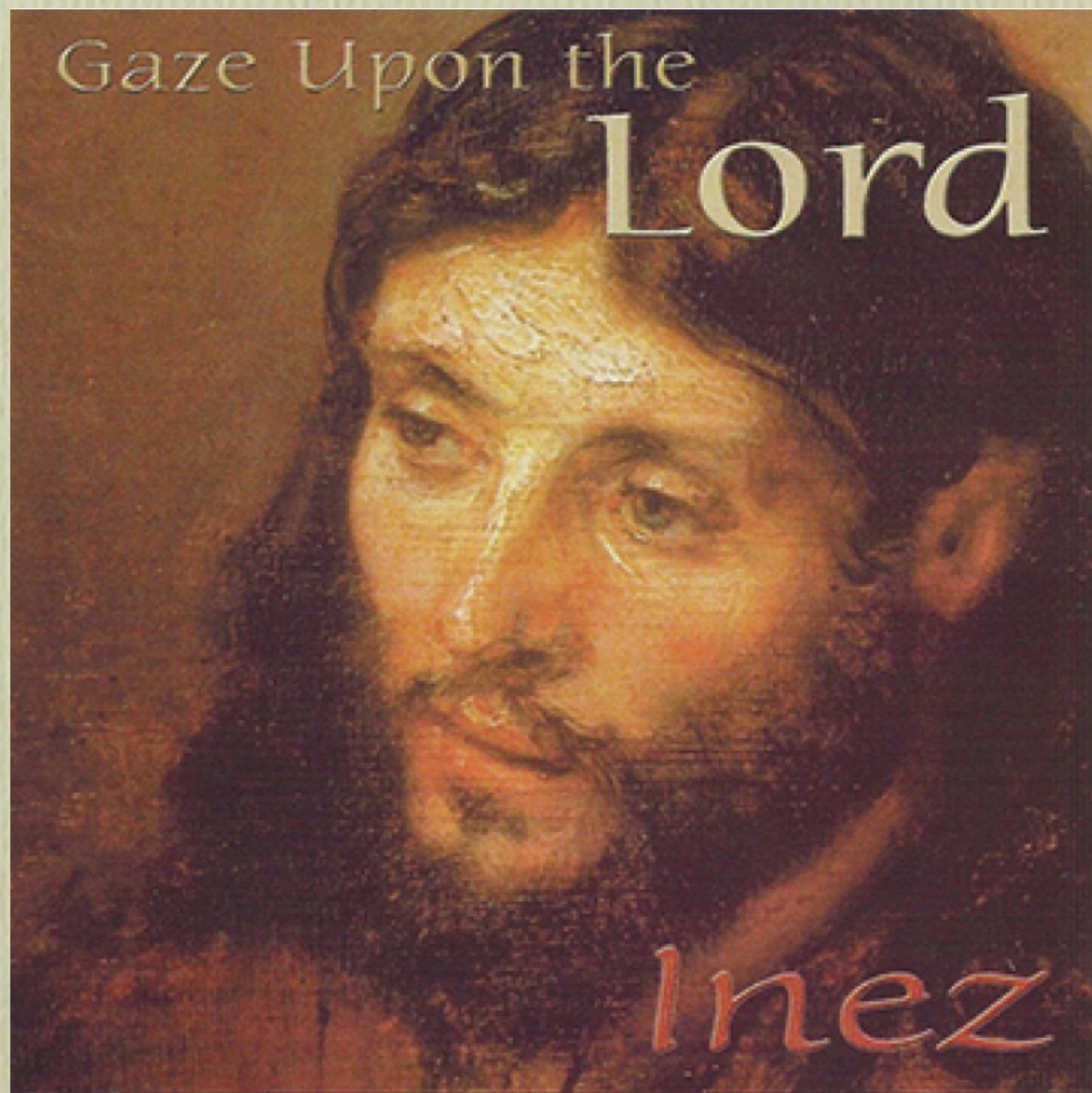




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I am with you on the journey  
always with you.





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