

Contemplative Prayer  
Father Bede Griffiths  
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I want to suggest the most important issue in the church and the world today, it seemed a bit exaggerated, it's not a very good word actually - contemplation, I'll explain what I mean. You see in the tradition of St. Paul in the New Testament, a human being is seen as a body, soul and spirit, it's a three fold division. But unfortunately, after the second or third century, the philosophy of Aristotle took over and this body, soul psychology was established in the church and in the world. And most people, Christians and others today think of a human being as a body/soul, a rational animal. And that means there's a big gap between you and God. God is somewhere up there, you're an animal here, with a rational mind. And for most people today, not only Christians but a vast majority of people I'd say still think of the human being as this body/soul - a rational being and there's nothing beyond. For many people there's nothing beyond. And don't forget the other, the sense of a spiritual reality pervading the world was absolutely universal until two thousand years ago. I mean all ancient people, it's fundamental, in India, Africa and also among the Native Americans. It's equally fundamental. So we've lost a dimension of human life - it's been lost. And most people today, live on the physical level, they think the whole world is a physical, not even an organism, it's dead matter which we have to manipulate and so on and you get this scientific materialism, and then you get Marxism, and economic materialism and so on. So that is one level. Now fortunately it's not so prevailing as it was. But the other level, the psychological, I would say 90% of people today are living on the psychological level. The psychological level is the senses, the feelings, imagination, the reason, the will. The whole psychological organism, conscious and unconscious, that is the psyche. The most majority of people, including nearly all Christians and Catholics live now from the psychological level. That is their standard of reference always. But in the ancient tradition, beyond the body and beyond the soul, the psyche is the numa(?) in Greek, the Atman in Sanskrit, the Spirit or the Self with the big S whatever you like. And the whole of understanding of the human nature is visiated <sp?> if we don't understand the presence of the spirit. Because body and soul both depend on the spirit. It's the principle of life from the reality, in the universe and in the human being. And when we cut that out of our lives, we're cutting the deepest dimension of reality out of our life, and that really was happening, in our church and in the world, we've lost this dimension. In America, it's extremely obvious and it's disastrous. But what interests me so much, I only come here occasionally but the last year I came, and this year, this tremendous awakening to the spiritual in America today. They've realized the limitations of the physical and the psychological and there's a breakthrough taking place for a vast number of people. They don't know what they're looking for, some do but they're breaking through. And I should mention, in our ashram in South India, people come from all parts of the world, and they're looking for this spiritual dimension, you find it in India, there's a hole, to some extent. But India is losing it also under the impact of Western civilization. India is losing the sense of the spiritual which is dominated its life for centuries and it's opening itself up to the Western view. So that's the situation in the world today. I honestly, I say to recover this dimension of human existence is the most urgent need for ourselves as individuals, for the human community and for the cosmos.

We're ruining the cosmos, because we don't recognize the divine spirit, like the Native Americans, the Great Spirit is in everywhere and everything. When we realize that, then the earth is sacred to you, you don't abuse it as we do. So all these issues come in and perhaps I should add the other one, it's all the domination of the masculine over the feminine, it's the patriarchal concept. Once you get that the rational mind is dominating, that is the masculine mind and everything is subject to it and at the point of the spirit, we're all feminine because the feminine is receptive. The masculine is dominating and controlling the science and technology and the feminine is receptive and intuitive and open to the divine, to the beyond. And therefore, today at this point when we're going out of this patriarchal, rational, scientific world, into a new world of the feminine, intuitive, the divine, that's the spiritual - is entering into our lives again. So that's a deep great issue in the world today and we're all responsible, each one of us. Because, this is very important, every human being, wherever they are, whatever they're doing, is a dimension of the spirit, you can deny it, you can ignore it and put down or simply be ignorant but you cannot escape it. Every human being has a spiritual dimension. And you know what happens at death, your body, your gross body begins to disintegrate, and then your psyche, that depends on the body, that also begins to disintegrate. It probably last on, we get this evidence of life beyond death and so on. There is a psychic survival in some sense. But essentially, the body so begins to disintegrate and the spirit remains - that is your eternal life. I like to tell a story. In India, the great South Indian seer, Ramanamashashi has his ashram in <???, that is about two hundred miles from us. He was a young man in <??mare> a very famous city in south city in India in the 19th century. When he was 16 or 17, he was sent to an American school, a Christian school, where he himself was a devout Brahmin<???, nothing very special but at this age, he suddenly he had a conviction that he was going to die. It was so powerful that he laid down where he was staying and he stretched himself out on the floor he had stopped breathing and he let himself get rigid and he said to himself, "this body is dead, am I dead?" And at that moment, he underwent a mystical death, he suddenly realized I am not this body, I am an eternal spirit. And he never lost that sense from the age of 17, he died of the age of 70 in 1950 and for one moment he never lost that sense - I am not this body. I am an eternal spirit. It was so overwhelming, he couldn't stay at the school, he couldn't stay with his family, he went to live in this holy hill out in Atchara<?> to Ramanala <?> and he lived in a cave for about 20 years. At first he never spoke at all. He was overwhelmed with this sense - I am this eternal spirit. And then he gradually came back to normal, people began to visit him, he began to write, he began to speak. And he eventually came back to normal and he built an ashram at the bottom of the hill and hundreds and thousands of people go to that every year, been going for the last 40 years now or more 50 or 60 years, to see him, and to realize to be in the presence of the man who is living in the spirit. It's a living witness to this. The total presence of the spirit is present in him. Well that's a digression.

Now the point is, we as human beings, we have to recognize these three dimensions in our lives. And the physical is the bodily organism, this is very important, we have a physical organism, we're part of the whole physical organism on the cosmos, and we have to recognize it, we're part of all these cosmic whole. And our bodies, we're living on it, we're taking food day by day from the earth and so on, and water and then we take in air around us, and all these electric currents working around us, we are physically bound up with nature. That's one dimension. The second,

we are a psychological organism. The psyche is not a separate little individual, we're all linked psychologically with one another and with human beings right from the beginning. Jung says in the collective unconscious, we all have the experience of humanity from the beginning in our unconscious and it can go back in your unconscious. Many speak now of having another birth and so on, I think it's only a way of speaking that you are able to go on your unconscious and live the past which is in all of us, the part of humanity is in each one of us in the unconscious and only little comes up into the conscious. So we're linked with the whole of humanity so that in the deep sense all human beings are one. St. Thomas Aquinas who had wonderful insight, psychologically as well as other ways, said "omnis homines unum homo" - "all men are one man" we're one organic whole, all inter-related, interlinked, physically and psychologically. So very complete. But beyond the physical, beyond the psychological is the third dimension of the spirit, the numa, the atman. And that is our point of self-transcendence, as long as we're in the psyche, we're dominated by the ego, in the Sanskrit it's called the aham-kara, the I-maker. We have the manas, the buddhi and the aham-kara. The manas means - ma is to measure, the measuring mind, the rational mind, the buddhi, same root as the buddha, the enlightened one is the enlightened mind and beyond those is the ego which imprisons you, it's your point of unity, you unify yourself at that point but if you get stuck at that point then you're imprisoned in your ego. And the spirit is the point where the ego opens itself up on the infinite, on the eternal. And to discover that point of the spirit in ourselves - that is the business of life, really. And it's not the business of meditation, I don't know how many of you meditate, but it's spreading all over the world today. the art of meditation is essentially to - well, it's sort of yoga, you calm the body first of all and to integrate and harmonize the body, it's very important and many find yoga, hatha yoga and pranayama very helpful, it's not necessary but it's helpful. And then you have harmonize your soul, your psyche, particularly your mind, your manas, which is always moving and particularly for us today, we can't stop the mind, it goes on and on and we develop it. I started when I was about four, I began to learn French when I was four and Latin when I was six and <Flit?> when I was nine and so on. You're pushed at this, from childhood. And your mind is working, working, working all the time and yoga, the <Patanjanis?> yoga, the classical treatise on yoga says yoga is <chita retini rod ?> the cessation of the movement of the mind, to stop that movement of the mind. It's a mechanism, it just goes on and on. It's a psychological mechanism, and you have to learn to, you need not stop it, you have to learn to calm it, to bring it to quietness, the stillness, they call it the still point. So to harmonize the body and then to try to harmonize your psyche, particularly your mind. And when you reach a certain point of harmony, your spirit begins to open, you don't do it, you can't do it. It has to do it of its own. That's why it's difficult. You can control the body to some extent, you control the mind to some extent, but then you have to let your spirit open up within you and it's that letting go, it's very difficult. But you have to let go and that's why I say it's feminine, feminine is receptive. And this is very important. The feminine is often put down, it's passive and a man is active and the feminine is passive but in Chinese it's what called wuwei - an active passivity. It's passivity which is very vitally receptive, it's the most powerful activity <??> but it looks as though it's passive. So at that point, we're passive and receptive, we're open to the divine, the eternal, the infinite, the One, whatever name we'd like to give to this infinite. So that is our human being - body, soul and spirit. And the call of the spirit is precisely to transcend ourselves. Carl Rahner, who was one of the few Catholic theologian who

was a mystic and he had a deep intuition and he said, the human being is constituted by this capacity for self-transcendence, we're not encouraged in our ego, our personality, our limited self, we have a capacity to go beyond it and to discover what he calls a holy mystery. Name it, you can call it God if you like, but it's an unfathomable mystery. We all open up on that transcendent mystery. So this is the calling, the contemplating. It's for everybody and little children are awake to the spirit, very often, many many will tell you, I don't know about myself particularly but people have often told me of their children at the age of three or four they have the most wonderful intuition, very often. They have a deep spiritual awareness. Then of course, it's put down as soon as they get educated, it all stop. It's terribly tragic, really. Also many women have it, much more than men, it's more natural to them. And very very simple people in India, of course, extremely common in Africa, but in Europe and America, also many still have this awareness, much simpler people, not the over educated, that's the danger. So we have this capacity within us. And the art of meditation is the art of opening ourselves to the presence of the Spirit. And there's a traditional way of meditation, which is in the monastic order to which I belong, and which I think is useful and there are four stages in this: lectio, meditatio, oratio and contemplatio. Lectio is reading. Most of us today particularly, have to begin with reading. In the old days you read the bible. I recommend reading different scriptures. And you many be interested to know, I'm planning a book now with a friend in Germany, of readings from the scriptures of the world. It's going to include Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, Sikh, Muslim, Jewish and Christian, seven religions. And I'm trying to show how there is a universal wisdom, a tradition of spiritual wisdom, coming through all these traditions and how we ought to be aware of it in our daily lives. We want this book to be used for meditation day by day, not just to read it through. In our ashram, we've been doing this for years now, at every prayer, we read from one of the different scriptures and in an atmosphere of prayer, and relating to your own Christian prayer, if you are Christian, it has wonderfully enriching power, it opens your heart and mind. So I'm very keen on this. And the little group with Pascaline's ashram here in America, every day when we pray together we always read one of these - the Upanishad, the Gita, the Tao Te Ching or one of these spiritual classics. So begin with reading and it can be a very wide reading, just as you feel but the spirit must not be too discursive because we're trying to bring the mind to unity, don't forget, we mustn't just let it go off again. So it should be a more concentrated reading. Then meditatio, you reflect on what you read, the bible or the scriptures or on whatever theme. Focus your attention, meditate on it. Then third is oratio - that is prayer. And many people today find prayer difficult. They say who am I praying to, is there somebody out there? They find it very awkward. Many mention this. And I think it's a simple answer. We must remember all images and concepts of God are projections, we project an image and a concept, which is useful, and we have to do it - the Father, the Son, the Holy Sprit, Christ, Krishna, all God, all these are projections of the mind, but we're made like this, we need images, we need concepts, but we must go beyond them, no sticking with the images and the concepts. And that's the great danger in religion, people have, particularly image of God, of Yahweh, of Allah, of Christ or of Krishna, or whatever. And you cling to your image - this is God - and other people must come to your God, your image. And that is disastrous, it's destroying humanity, this religious conflict over your images of God. It's all it is really. And so that is oratio. And we have the final way of prayer, many people find the traditional way and others are searching for a way of prayer which is

meaningful. But now - contemplatio - is precisely the point when you go beyond your images and your thoughts and beyond every created form whatsoever. We've got to enter into the silence, the darkness, the stillness, the death in a sense, that's why it's difficult. To die to all these outer world. And you have to do it everyday, it's the only way. We say twice a day if possible, morning and in the evening. In our ashram, we do one hour in the morning, and the early morning is the best. In India, they say hapas for <??> is the most auspicious time for meditation. We do it at 5:30 actually, in America we do it a little bit later but you need every day, it's not the length of time or a particular time but the regularity, day by day to stop all these thinking and these imaging and all these activity of the mind and let it become still in the presence of the infinite. That's your aim. And you have to do it twice a day if possible and it can be dull. You think it's going to be wonderful, you're in the presence of God and nothing happens at all. And you got to live through these dull dark periods, it can be very dark at times. I'll come to that later. But also if you persevere, something begins to emerge, your spirit begins to take over and it's wonderful. Sometimes it's very dramatic, your conversion, but normally you'll just discover something else, a new dimension is emerging in your life, day by day, and in your conduct. <??> be anything in the meditation but you begin to see your whole behavior, attitude, conduct is beginning to change, something else is coming to your life, so that's the secret of this contemplation. So now, that's the method for the three stages leading us into contemplation. And now when we reach contemplation, we go beyond all dualities. The rational mind is a dualistic mind. It thinks always in terms of duality, of good and evil, of truth and untruth, right and wrong, of black and white, of outside and inside, of conscious and unconscious, it's always a dualistic mind, the rational mind. And it's necessary, we have to use a dualistic mind. But we have to go beyond it. And we're stuck with this dualistic mind. And most people don't think there's anything beyond your rational mind is all there is. But it's a total illusion. It's a particular way of observing the universe. And I think you know now from the scientific point of view when we say that the whole solid matter around us, all these solid building and so on, is an illusion really, a projection. We project around us a three dimension universe and we separate all the different people and things around us, and we make this world around us through our rational mind working on our senses. It's perfectly normal behavior. But <??> again an illusion, in the scientific view today is that the universe is a field of energies, vibrating, different frequencies. The whole universe is vibrating field of energies in which we project, it's a three dimensional universe. So we're doing that all the time and that it is the work of the dualistic mind. And it's amazing that scientists today, physicists and biologists, have discovered from twenty scientific view that this is the reality, there are no solid particle atoms or electronic whatever, there are only vibrations of energy behind everything. So this is changing our whole outlook on life. So we have to recognize the power of projection and of course, with all our religious images and so on, we do exactly the same, we project this image of Christ and God and the Father and another religion, of Allah, of Yahweh or whatever, these are all projection to the human mind and perfectly necessary, the rational mind is part of our nature, we have to project but then we have to go beyond. And contemplation is going beyond the rational mind. And I've written an introduction to this book, in which I tried to show that in every tradition, from the Hindu and the Buddhist on to the Christian <??> the movement is from dualistic religion to a non-dual reality. Unfortunately, Islam and Judaism are a big problem because the bible, the old testament and the Koran are extremely dualistic. And all these ideas of

a punishing God, always threatening you with punishment and judgment and condemnation. And that is necessary, it's a stage in human life and progress and religion but you have to go beyond it. And in the mystical tradition of the Islam, the Sufis, all the mystical <??> and the Kabbalah, you go into <??> non duality is the ultimate reality. It's so difficult because you can't think non-duality, once you think you make a duality of it. Get beyond thinking. It's very difficult but that is contemplation, that beyond thinking. It's letting the mind become still, become silent, then something happens, and allow it to happen. And when you reach that stage you get this sense of absolute oneness and all through the Indian traditions, and the Sufis are the same of course. And also, don't forget in our Christian tradition, it's very important, in the neo-Platonist<??> of the 4th century<?>, the Christian tradition took up this idea of going beyond knowing. The great person <??> I don't know whether he's familiar, he now believed to be, he called himself, and he's a disciple of St. Paul, that he's generally believed to be a Syrian monk, the 6th century had this profound inside through neo-Platonism. And he said you must get beyond all knowing into the cloud of unknowing, beyond the images and concepts of being, truth, goodness, love, everything you can conceive, you've got to go beyond into the divine darkness, there you encounter reality, otherwise you're projecting. This is the problem. And so it streamed <?> into the Christian tradition then and it is present in all the traditions but it's a combination, we've got to through the dualism to the non-dual reality beyond. And that's where I think the world is being lead today.

We've gone through this tremendous rational process in science and philosophy and theology and so on and we really worked that out and now we're being taken beyond. All over the world, people are discovering there's something beyond the dualities. An awakening to this hidden mystery, whatever you like to call it. This is where we are, this is a very dramatic moment in our history. So now that's our aim in our path in our understanding, now we come on a difficulty. So see, when we try to go beyond the rational mind, body/soul, into the spirit, the great danger is we tend to suppress the mind and the body. And in the Christian tradition, we have a very very bad tradition of suppressing our feelings. I don't know how many of you are Catholics, but Catholic churches - particularly bad, we're all taught to suppress our feelings. And it's disastrous - anger, hatred and resentment, also fear, anxiety and sexual desire, all these must be suppressed, the child mustn't be angry, it mustn't hate anybody, never hate anybody, must not have any sexual desire, if they come, we need to put them away, go to confessions. Of course, you don't get rid of them, they go to the unconscious and they become negative forces in the unconscious. It's terrible, the effect. Of course grace and prayer, these things can relieve you, but for many people, I know so many Catholics come to the ashram and they just left the church and they always tell you, as a child I had this awful negative view of myself, of sin and guilt and so on, and I've just given up hope. So that's where so many people are and we really have to face that. It's totally wrong to suppress feelings, you can't get rid of it on the spot of course but you must face them and I think face them in meditation. The people differ on this. Father John Main, whom I follow largely, his work - Meditation with the Mantra - he always said don't attend them, let them go, for ordinary distraction, that's okay, but these deep psychological wounds, really, they are, that's not enough, you have to bring them into consciousness, you must become aware of what's happening. I attended a session with Stan Grove of <Eselin??> once. He's wonderful with his wife,



Christina. They run these sessions, I think they call it Rebirthing and there's a big room like this, with mattresses and some people are laid out on the mattresses and somebody sits there to watch them. And they were told to relax totally to shut their eyes and to breathe deeply and to let go. And then they began to play music first of all rather gentle and it works out to a tremendous wail music or something, very violent. And they all begin to get... terrific traumatic experience, they begin shouting and waving their arms and all. And they go through all their repressed emotions, begin to come up even the birth trauma. They say, I don't know if you know, this is what I'm told, that the fetus, the embryo is floating in the amniotic fluid in the womb and it's a beautiful state, it's paradise, blissful. And then the side of the womb becomes to close in, it's like a prison suddenly. Your whole world is closing in, only a tiny little passage remains and you have to struggle out through this passage. Apparently as Stan Grove and his wife would say, this is turmoil in all of us, it's awful, we're in paradise and this dreadful thing happens and we're pushed out to a different world. So this is the sort of things that are deep and then all these other feelings which you won't admit. People won't admit you hate your mother. It's very very common. Because the child is very emotional, it depends entirely on the mother, the way she touches it and so on. And if the mother doesn't care properly for the child, she may have too many children, maybe so many problems, the child feels rejected and emotionally it has a terrible effect of isolation, of insecurity, they don't know where they are and when you're forty years old, you discover what happened when you were two years old. So it's a terrible problem, that we all carry these terrible wounds from infancy, from the depths of our beings and we have to bring them out. Sometimes you need a psychologist to help you. It's very difficult, but otherwise you can learn to let them come up in meditation into consciousness and learn to observe your feelings. This is a great Buddhist method that I think many of you know it. To observe your feelings, don't give way to them and don't suppress them. But simply observe them. And they say, like physical pain, I haven't done it much but many sitting for a long time in <??> or something you get terrible pain in the knees or somewhere, and they all tell you to observe the pain, it's something <??> you think it's terrible and you can't bear it, but detach from it and observe it and it will go away. I remember one person telling me, they had some injury and the knee I think it was, and it was very painful at first but after one or two sessions the pain has disappeared after that. So you learn to observe your feelings, your hatred, your anger, your resentment, your fear, your anxiety and of course, above all, for most Christians certainly, sexual desire, which is sort of banned, you have <??> permission if you are happily married <??> and you simply have to recognize it, it's as much a part of your nature as anything else and again to observe it. To be able to detach and observe and allow the feeling, but don't give way to it, and don't suppress it. It's not easy, it's embarrassing. But I think it's terribly important for most people today, especially for most Christians. So we all need to reflect on that.

So then, we go into meditation and we use the mantra. People can make a choice. If you want to stop all these activity of the mind, you need something to hang on to as it were. And if you quietly repeat a sacred word, it has that effect. I use the Jesus prayer, it's very long "Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me" which people find too long but there are very short ones. John Main uses "Maranatha". That's Aramaic, comes from the New Testament, one of the few Aramaic words in the New Testament. Jesus spoke Aramaic, don't forget, not Greek. So

Maranatha is "Lord, Come, Come, Lord": So you quietly repeat "Maranatha. Maranatha". And Swami Amoldash<??>, who is the leading yogi in our ashram who died very suddenly last year, it was a very great loss to us all, he had "Iesu Abba". Iesu - you breath in, Abba Father - you breath out. And many found that very effective. But find a mantra something to - like a lifeline - to hold on to, while you let your thoughts, feelings, desires, fear, let them all go and allow the mantra to take over and bring you into the presence, the mantra is your way into the presence, to the awareness, the open, the <???. So that's our method using our mantra. Some people simply use the breathing, observe the breathing, either here or the abdomen, others use visualization. The Tibetans particularly use a lot of visualization. So you can choose your method but you've got to find some way of stopping the mechanism of the mind and opening it up to the transcendent, the inner reality. So that is our point where we enter into contemplation.

I would say that contemplation is really the experience of love. It's love knowledge, rational knowledge is knowledge without love, you can be a perfect scientist without any love. But contemplative knowledge - wisdom, is love knowledge, it's where the mind is taken into the deepest center and this love which is both our love and the love of God is that point of the spirit, as Paul says the spirit of God bears witness with our spirit and we are children of God, at that point of the spirit we're in communion with God. And that is where love goes beyond the human, beyond the limits and really we participate in the love of God, it's tremendous. Father John Main had a beautiful phrase, he said "the aim of meditation is to share in the consciousness of Christ". And Jesus was in constant communion with the Father and this is very important. A lot of people, Catholics, I think especially, tend to focus on Jesus as though he's the end, he's God. But that's not theologically correct. Jesus is not simply God at all, Jesus is from God, and to God and in God, but he's not the father. Again and again, <??> I'm in the Father, the Father's in me, receive, receive the Father, but I am not the Father, Jesus is not God in that sense. He's from God and God is in him and he is in God. And he wants us to share in his experience of God as Father. And John Main said is to meditate is to enter the stream of love which goes between the Father and the Son and the Son and the Father and is the Holy Spirit, that stream of love is the Holy Spirit. And that's where you enter into the stream, into the life <???. So it's tremendous when you reflect what really opens up to us.

Now that's why this business of psychology is - as long as we have suppressed feelings in ourselves, the love will be very very imperfect, it may be quite illusory. You can suppress your feelings, especially your sexual feelings and so on, and you can be meditating, thinking you are very spiritual whereas really you simply suppress one half of your nature and this love is a fantasy, it's not a real love, unless in your contemplation, you've got to integrate your body and your soul in the spirit. And then you're a fully human being - realized. But if we let the body go and let the psyche go then we're not fully human. And that's a great danger in Christianity. Unfortunately, St. John of the Cross was a wonderful person, a wonderful saint and he had the most wonderful love but his method is disastrous, I think. He suppresses the body and the senses and the emotions and the mind and he had a wonderful experience. He somehow knew how to transform the body soul, the energy into the divine, but most people who follow that method, it's the opposite, they simply cut themselves from all that is human and natural and get an artificial love



which they think is divine, it's nothing of the sort really. It's terribly tragic. How easily we can deceive ourselves. So we all have to reflect on that, how to - and this is the point - how to transform our human nature. And I'd like to say particularly about the sexual energy, I've been staying at the new Camaldolese, it's my own monastery, we went on to this Camaldolese congregation and Father Bruno there, he was the former prior, has the most wonderful insight, into spirituality and particularly on this subject of sexuality because you see, the tradition in the Church, in the monastery, I was brought up in it, when you enter a monastery, you leave your sex behind, whether you're a man or a woman, whatever, you have nothing more to do with it, you're for God alone, loving your brethren and so on but no sex at all. It's an illusion. All you've done is to suppress it. You can't rid of it at all, if you're a saint you may be able to do it, but the normal person can't do it at all, and therefore he says that today, the Christian is called to be conscious of one's own sexuality and the transformation of sexuality, not a suppression and not simply its ignoring it but consciously bringing it to stream of energy into your prayer into your meditation and into the presence of God. And he goes so far to say that the sexual energy is the presence of the Holy Spirit in us. The Holy Spirit, the whole of our being, our body, our soul and our whole being, sexual energy is love energy it's the love energy of our nature and it can be expended in a very human way but it can be open to the divine and then the Holy Spirit takes hold of the whole sexual energy and transforms it. In India, we have the Tantric Yoga, I don't know whether you know the Kundalini. It's extremely interesting method, it came into Hinduism and Buddhism about the third century after Christ. It reverses the normal pathway, was to go beyond your body, your soul into the divine. But they began to find what was happening and Tantric came and said no, you've got to open your body and your soul to the divine. And they have this seven chakras, they call it, centers of psychic energy from the base of the spine to the crown of the head and the aim is -it's no good suppressing the lower chakras that's the physical chakra, the sex chakra, emotional chakra, the heart chakra, the voice chakra, music and poetry and so on, the head chakra, the an<?> chakra, which is all the intellect and so on and the sohus rares<??> the thousand petal lotus at the crown of the head, that's where you open on the infinite. The aim is to let the energy flow, it should flow from the base of the spine through all the chakras and be surrendered to God and then the Holy Spirit can come and penetrate all the levels of your being. But if you suppress any of the chakras and most people do then the whole flow of energy stops and it breaks out at the sex level or the physical level or the emotional level or worse of all perhaps the intellectual level, you get locked into your mind. So if you stop the energy's flow at that point, then you prevent the humanization, the integration of your personality. This is really something, we're only learning this, it's just coming into the church, now we have to learn how we can integrate the physical being and we have to attend to the physical body. Yoga of course is a whole discipline on the physical body and diet is very important, the food you eat. You are what you eat to that extent. And so diet and yoga is very fundamental and every kind of discipline of the body, discipline not in the sense of controlling and masculine<??> but of harmonizing, yoga is harmony, harmonizing the body. And then the integration of the psyche at every level, don't forget the emotional level, all the sense level, all the imagination, tremendously creative imagination. And the intellect also, do not suppress the rational mind, it has its proper place in it <??> So all the faculties have to be opened up to this flow of energy and it's very interesting we always think of God as our Father in heaven it's up there. But another way to think of God is the

ground of our being, he's beneath everything, Eckhart, who is a great master, says God is an underground river. I think it's wonderful. And in the gospel, Jesus says if you <??> the real fountain of water springing up from eternal life, springing up within you. So God is Mother this is very important. When I was in Camaldolese just recently they let..

Other side of tape:

Theological work, showing that in the best tradition of the church, the Holy Spirit is Mother, she's feminine. They are neither masculine or feminine, but we have to have an image, and we have all masculine image of God - he's Father, he's Son and the Holy Spirit is "HE" always. And there's no reason for that at all, it's prejudice, we can use the image of the Father, it's a very beautiful one and we can keep the image of the Son but we must keep the Holy Spirit as Mother. And in the Syrian Church, the word ruah, which is in Hebrew, the spirit in Syriac, it's also ruah, it's feminine. And in the Syrian Church, they have Our Mother, the Holy Spirit. And I began to pray to the Holy Spirit as Mother just recently. And it's very wonderful, I recommend it to everybody. It's such a change, you can't imagine it. You're looking up all the time and going up like this and then you realize that God is coming into you. I once knew a Jungian analyst, a very wonderful person and he said one thing I know for certain, women receive the Holy Spirit through the soles of their feet. I've never had that <laugh> <??> but it's in the earth, in matter, in life, in your whole being and that is God, in the depths of your being. And you're <??> that divine power, that Shakti, into energy <??> and to meet the Father from above and this Kundalini Yoga, they say the Shakti, the feminine energy rises up and she meets with Shiva the pure consciousness and then the human being is integrated, energy and consciousness, Shiva and Shakti unite and you've got a total human fulfillment, you become one, no longer dual <??>, unity which integrates everything, as a unity which simply leaves everything out, this is a unity which integrates every aspect of one's being. So that I think is what we're being called today. And I put it very strongly, the very definite movement of the Holy Spirit in the world and in the Church today. I don't travel very widely but I've been to Australia, as well as Europe and America, wherever you go, people are searching for this deeper understanding of human nature and of the church, and of the world and all these different currents of ecology and feminism and the new science and new medicine, food, all these things are coming together and we're entering into a new age. People don't like the phrase new age sometimes but something new is coming, all the time, it's coming into our lives and we have to be sensitive to it, allow it to come and to transform us. So that's really what I wanted to put before you, there's something really urgent in our lives. People's lives are being ruined, false doctrine, suppression of their feelings, and so on, and false image of God and feelings of guilt and so on, and I must say honestly, I don't know how you take it but so much of the Old Testament, it's a phase in human development. I think humanity have to go through that phase of the father and the judge and the king and the lord and the judgment and the condemnation, it's a part of growth, you have to face that. But then you have to rediscover the Mother, if you go on with that, you become simply destructive and these religions become totally destructive after a time, unless we discover the mother. Fortunately in the Catholic church, the devotion to our Lady brings a feminine image into our life and it has helped as a lot but we need more than that, we need the Holy Spirit as Mother. God himself is Mother as well as Father

and of course beyond father and mother. And ultimately and perhaps I want to end with that, we have to go beyond all such images and enter into the silence the stillness where there's no image, no thought where there is nothing and that is very difficult. The Buddhist say, the ultimate is sunyata <?>, it's a void, an emptiness, a total nothingness and in that nothingness everything is present. And the Hindu has a beautiful image, it says in the castle of nine gates of the body, we have nine openings, we have eyes, ears, nose, and so on, there is a shrine, and in that shrine there is a lotus, and in that lotus, there is a little space, what is there which dwells in the little space in the heart of the lotus and they say the whole universe is in that little space, it's not dimension not a space time of course, it's beyond space/time, and the whole universe is in your heart and God himself, the source of all is in your heart. And when you allow this transformation take place you enter into the fullness of reality, in the depths of your own being, which is the depths of everybody else's being in the whole universe, discover the divine reality in yourself. So that's what I say I wanted to put before you, something really urgent in our lives to share with others and to try to live in our own particular way.

#### Question and Answer Section:

If anybody wants to ask any questions, I'm prepared to answer, just as you feel like.

Question: Why is it that wisdom is referred to in the feminine? Something in me instinctively thinks of wisdom in the Holy Spirit, it's the same thing, but why is the Holy Spirit masculine and wisdom so documented in our Judeo-Christian tradition...

Answer: This book I mentioned, the Divine Mother <with Father Bruno Barnhart???) there's a great point in that. And he said, from about the third or fourth century onwards, wisdom is attributed to the Son and the whole concept of the feminine wisdom was lost. And it's part of the whole theological development. The whole church, you can't deny it, is a patriarchal system, and the Greek and Latin Fathers, the whole medieval world, it was a patriarchal world and the Father/Son image took over and the feminine was simply lost. And only now is.. and this Father Bruno has written a wonderful paper in which he gave me a few days ago, on Sophia, the feminine wisdom, this famous Hagia Sophia in Constantinople Church of the Holy Wisdom. It has been lost. We have to recover it, wisdom is feminine. And I always feel the feminine receptivity is the essence <?> to the feminine. The Holy Spirit is simply the love which surrenders to the Father in the Son. Within the Trinity itself, there is this feminine communion of love, with the Father, gives birth to the Son. <???) So one has to recover that image of the feminine wisdom <???) which is being lost now in the church.

Question: How do you pray with the Hebrew scriptures, when you see such violence and bloodshed, David killing everybody?

Father Bede's Answer: Ah, it's very difficult. I think we've got to do something about it, I was talking to Brother David, he's one of the senior monks at New Camaldolese and I got a page<???) written a little thing on the psalms and I really think we have...you see what happened is this, in

the middle ages, and the fathers, they interpret all symbolically, they have a wonderful symbolic system, you know "blessed be he who shall take your children and dash them against the stones". said about the children of Babylonians. And they said, that's taking your evil thoughts and dashing them on the rock Christ, well, that's wonderful, but it's got nothing to do with the original. And so they had this beautiful sacramental symbolic system but that is breaking down for most people now, they didn't know the literal meaning we know the literal meaning now and it's terrible, in many places. So I think we really have to learn to see whole of the Old Testament as stage of growth leading to fulfillment in Christ and I think Jesus is taking us beyond all that, he threw out the Jewish system, and there's dualism in the New Testament, especially in St. Matthew's gospel, it's very Jewish, and I think Jesus came out of this Jewish tradition with this dualism, God separate from the world and so on, and he was opening the path all the time, going beyond the law, opening himself up to women in extra -ordinary way, to the outcasts and so on, and finally simply surrendering himself to death and humiliation and destruction in the hands of the world around him and through that simple simple self surrender, opening the path beyond all these limitations, we've got to go through and with him to the beyond. That is the movement of the bible is to go beyond. There's a nice Buddhist saying: "We use words to get beyond words, and reach the wordless essence". So we go beyond the words of the bible to reach the word of God which is beyond all words and which is the ultimate. So that is our goal, really.

Comment: Just a word on the Hebrew scriptures, I think I see them a little differently than what you're describing because I see them as being including great diversity in what seems like contradiction. And so, rather than just being one phase, I think they include in them, given the apocalyptic, the wisdom tradition, elements within the psalms and the prophets and even the creation stories, there's a way, there's a great richness which doesn't even exist in the Christian scriptures and that has been a more helpful way for me. One scholar I would cite is Paul Hanson, who <??> called dynamic transcendence, it says -- do you dismiss this because of the violence or God is the punishing judge or can you pick up a threat throughout a dynamic transcendent that exists through many different types and I think what we have in the Hebrew bible is more of a historical, it's a story. So it's how people have interpreted God acting in their lives which comes out very violently but there are ways which I think is very important for us because it's more like what we do today, we are many projections. It's like there's a challenge to see the dynamic transcendent in it instead of seeing it just as problematic in an earlier stage that Jesus transcended.

Father Bede: There's a thread going through it you know, you're quite right, really yes.

Comment: But I think even the contradiction can be helpful for us, because that exists within us as well.

Father Bede: It's really not easy, is it, to discern, the real deep meaning behind it, there is a deep meaning behind the whole of the bible, right from the beginning, but it's shadowed over as it were. So perhaps we should end with the chant. We always end with Pornamada. Pornam is the same as clear <??> in Greek - the fullness, God is the fullness of reality and this world has its own fullness and you take the fullness of the world with the fullness of God and God alone

remains, the world adds nothing and takes nothing from God. He includes the whole universe in himself. <chanting>