

Holy Week 2024

The Polarity of Will and Surrender

In the morning teaching today, I want to focus on this really extraordinary passage, this day that we're in, which has been known in the Anglo traditions as Maundy Thursday, which of course comes out of the Latin word "mandatum" and it's short for the New Commandment.

As you know, the "mandatum nobis" that's the one we're talking about, that's how you got Maundy Thursday.

The word "mandate" comes out of it.

So a new piece of trivia that you didn't know before?

You wondered why they called it Maundy?

That's why they did it.

But this very, very complex day really has three themes that get interwoven often awkwardly.

First of all, there is this beautiful giving of the New Commandment.

"Behold, I give you a new commandment.

Love one another as I have loved you."

So that would be a mouthful in its own, worth a day's celebration.

But they add onto that the second major piece in the Maundy Thursday, which is the giving of the Eucharist.

It's the day that we essentially commemorate in the Christian liturgical year as the formal institution of the bread and the wine in living remembrance.

In connection with what the instructions that Jesus gave at the dinner table and the ritual he took them through on the last night of his life, not yet in captivity.

The last night of his life period, if you read certain timescripts in the gospel, because he was over and done with by three o'clock the next day.

So that's what we live in liturgical tradition, the last life of this human prophet's earthly existence in first body.

And that's another biggie in itself.

And then the third we've got that is the Garden of Gethsemane.

And for me this is really perhaps in a sense the most interesting of the struggles, where the gospel zeroes in on Jesus' own all too natural human ambivalence about this.

Part of you knows what you have to do and part of you just sort of hates.

You know, "Please, if it be thy will, if you can, let this cup pass for me."

And so it really focuses in, for me, the most important piece of the whole experiential struggle.

How do we go right into that conflict inside ourselves between the part that wants to save their skin and the part that's really willing and able to go on.

And then this gets sort of interwebbed with the theme of vigilance.

And that often turns to sort of shaming and guilt in the kind of inimitable way that liturgists do.

They dive right into his cross remark, "Couldn't you even stay awake for an hour with me?"

And so Christians pay for that ever after by signing up for an hour in the middle of the night to come and sit in a church and scroll on their cell phone.

"O piety, thou art my beauty unexcelled."

But these are all complex parts and they make for awkward liturgy.

And then, of course, people throw in the foot washing too to sort of drive the point home about loving one another.

But in the era we're in today and in Maine in the end of March, I mean, who in the hell is walking around town in bare feet that are dusty and need to be washed?

It's like we've got to wash each other's armpits.

So it's a liturgy with a lot of complex signals going in all directions.

And once again, I want to today, from the point of view of the really gorgeous possibility that opens up for people that have got serious experience and familiarity with the whole

Gurdjieff tradition, there are some beautiful windows into the essential gestures of this day.

You know, what is vigilance?

What is staying awake?

The many, many windows that we'll talk about.

I want to focus today on one, you know, this particular day seems a way to share and ponder and work with my own work in progress with a really, really interesting, I won't call it conflict, but I will call it tension between the whole prevailing ambience in the Fourth Way in the Gurdjieff teaching and the prevailing center of gravity in the Christian teaching.

This is a day in Maundy Thursday where you basically have to sit right there on the horns of this dilemma and figure out how in the end you resolve it and go forward.

So to speak with, it almost seems that at this point as through the whole way, the work and the Christian mystical and apophatic tradition are implicitly going in slightly different directions and this on this day becomes impossible to avoid.

You know, we've got to bring the two into reconciliation.

So that's basically going to be my own reflections for this morning's teaching.

The first is in the Gurdjieff work, this strong concentration on "I wish to be, I am."

We have one of the exercises in there, 18, they all have the rephrase, "I wish to be, I can be, I have the right to be, I have the power to be."

That's direct quote out of 18, but any of you who have been in the work, bump into this.

This strong teaching that we are concentrated, we go around weather-cocking, there's nobody that can stay put and that being lies in the direction of summoning will and aim to gather and in some senses create out of this bunch of Lego pieces that we are a structure that I can actually call "I."

And that's a really, really powerful theme in the work and anybody who's been in any of the lines of the work bumps into that.

And then there is that tension on the other hand that we've really got in our face all of Holy Week.

"Unless a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it remains a single grain, but if it dies it shall yield a rich harvest.

Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit."

The whole emphasis on self-abandonment, willingness to die, willingness to entrust.

And so we've got these two fundamental tensions.

The one towards gathering and collecting, the one toward giving it all up, the yielding the concentration impulse and the surrender impulse.

And for my own fifty years or more of consciously trying to walk the path, I'm constantly called to juggle these two.

And sometimes they feel to me like a direct conflict.

Sometimes they feel like a creative tension.

I'm quite sure at this point that they are affirming and denying in a higher resolution and that you basically need them both.

But until you find that higher resolution, you get stuck on one horn of the dilemma, which was my early experience.

I would say I probably spent a good fifteen years shuffling back and forth when I got completely bored with the loose fantasies of Christianity where people think that just because they go to church and have the Eucharist, "I'm part of the mystical body.

I'm saved.

I'm here.

I've got a soul."

You know?

And I just think, "Delusion.

What part of delusion do you not understand?"

And so I go back to the work and can stand it and just put up with it and really grow for a while until I find idiots telling me that they have achieved advanced being because they can walk around all day with a pebble in their shoe under their foot while counting backwards from a hundred constantly while remembering themselves.

And that therefore they have attained advanced being.

And I say, "Let me out of here."

Go back and hang out with the Christians for a while until they drive you mad.

So that's been yaddy-dee-dee-dee-dee.

My life on the badminton table of transformation.

But have any other of you in the room sort of experienced these as tensions and pulls?

Are we supposed to, in the final analysis, yield it up or call it in?

At the moment where the gun is to your head, do you say, "I am," or do you say, "Into your hands I commit my spirit?"

And it's interesting.

And I sometimes say to myself, "I wonder what I'll do after all these years of pondering it."

I mean, when I finally reach the moment where my own life is on the line, I wonder if I'm going to actually yield and do that or whether I'm just going to clench in and say, "No, bastard, I'm living longer."

You know, I don't know what force in me will win yet.

But I recognize it as a really interesting creative tension.

To work at it, and to state right from the outside that they cannot be opposites, because they are both functionally true, that the essence of the Gurdjieff teaching was really that the I we take ourself to be is like a shifting collage of personalities. 987, he said at one point, that all sort of cycle by depending on called forth by the occasion, you're one thing here, you're another thing here.

You've got voice, you've got outfit, you've got images to complement whichever self you are in whatever context.

And apart from those contexts, the whole charade becomes obvious.

You have no self.

That you are completely at the mercy of reactivity, of environmental camouflaging.

And so for Gurdjieff, the teaching begins not until people can gather from the various shattered reactive elements of them.

Something that can stay put and is not completely dependent on external impulses.

The only way you can find yourself in an unevolved self is to either tell a story about yourself or to match yourself and bounce board off whatever is being thrown at you.

So there's nobody that consistently stays put.

You are dependent on your environment, your immediate context, to give you the fake I that you're going to play right now.

So Gurdjieff says this is a mess.

That people in that phase of being can't be trusted to run the universe.

They can't be trusted to get themselves on a bus to Boston.

It's just too much chaos.

And people in that state can't give their word and make their word stick because they have no "they" that gives their word.

Gurdjieff said beautifully, "One I issues a blank check that the other I then sort of casually tears up."

I remember that and it drove me crazy teaching in Aspen that has almost a design of this.

The bottom line in Aspen was "better your options."

We would work and work and work to put a spiritual event together.

The last morning my team would abandon me.

"Oh, have you heard?

The Dalai Lama is up in Boulder."

Or, "It doesn't work for me to show up."

So gone.

You could never build it.

It's like building it on sand.

So Gurdjieff says you have to realize that the I you think you are is not there.

And until you can collect something that stays put, you're not in the game.

You're just sort of walking around in this story of yourself.

And you see that and you taste that.

And once you do, you just look through the establishments, the mirrors we create in our culture to hold ourselves in these completely illusory and deceptive relationships with ourselves.

So in that sense, his work offers us a lifeline.

I remember a comment that just gave, you know, put the chills of the Lord in me when I first read Jacob Needleman's *Lost Christianity*, maybe 40 years ago now, which was my own functional introduction to the Gurdjieff work.

And he has this line that says that people who think that they can do the work of Christianity because they call themselves Christians are like a stone trying to jump out of the river and fly to the sea.

And Needleman's whole point is that before any of the Christian gospel was possible, that we needed to develop a middle, you know, a more subtle thing that was actually capable of doing it.

And I mean, I would interpret that nowadays to say that the capacity to be a Christian begins at the Kesdjan level.

I'm willing to say that the first body that identifies its I wholly with its own self will be unable in the final analysis to take the steps that actually turn the Christian path into the sacramental path that it is.

In the end, the first body self, "moi," on its own, will always default to self-preservation, period.

And will always take what it receives from the spiritual world and bring it back to spiritual materialism.

Look, I'm getting better, I'm getting stronger, I'm getting, you know, it remains supremely all about me until there is an established and comfortable second body that then can

connect with the demands and the requirements and the teachings of the order that Christianity really emerges from.

I mean, Christianity's home is in World Twelve.

But Jesus saw this himself when he was, and I'm quite convinced that his teaching about the kingdom of heaven, for him the kingdom of heaven, I believe, is functionally what we went through in the exercise this morning.

It's as simple as exercise 61.

The capacity to sense fully your first body self is alive and good, the "moi" that lives there as necessary and beautiful and useful, but there is "je" that doesn't live in this, that lives in the second body and that is the patron of the little one.

Gurdjieff was certainly hitting about this in the famous story of the horse and the carriage and the driver.

The owner of the carriage is definitely a Kesdjan owner.

Yeah, Vesna?

I also see it as if it's possible to let go or to surrender if there is nothing to be, to let go, if there is nothing built.

Yeah.

One can let go consciously, but it's not kind of linear, it's kind of ongoing.

It's always something like I first build and then I lose it.

Yeah, yeah, exactly.

And that's the direction in which the resolution lies.

But I think it doesn't lie in exactly the way that people usually interpret it.

I mean, that's the first step, but it's not the full step.

The first step, you know, you hear it often in the psychological professions, you have to have a self before you can give it.

And that's an accurate description as far as it goes, but it doesn't really go far enough because it succumbs finally to the mistake that even the work tends to make.

To think that the self that says "I am" is the core of my being.

Your first body self, your "moi," is never going to be built up to the place where it becomes "je."

And the sense that comes, I think, from Christianity and our sense that we have an immortal soul and we have an identity, and that's us, and that when we evolve we simply improve it or dismantle it.

But no, it doesn't work that way.

That there is a self that grows out of relationship with a being inhabiting and knowing itself only in the first body.

"Moi," as he calls it.

And there is a self, a whole different sense of selfhood that emerges when the second body self, the Kesdjan self, and the first body self have been both awakened and then live in living relationship with each other.

So I said at the last end of the session that this great statement that we all love in the work, it's almost the chorus on the t-shirt "I am, I am," which gets asserted.

It's not a statement.

It's a commitment to a relationship in which it's always a dynamism.

And it involves an active pouring in both directions between the smaller, which has a legitimate right and need to be, and the larger, which is holding down the fort in the worlds through which truth, order, power, goodness, and beauty are received and into which we transmit the fruits of our own labors to become conscious for the sake of the entire interplanetary harmony.

It's not just about giving up our lives so the higher powers can have a good Thanksgiving dinner.

This is needed for the balance of the whole intricate rig that allows the finite to exist in dramatic dialogue with the infinite that allows God to come forth from the top of his own head and create the worlds.

It's an invasively, vastly reciprocal exchange happening at every degree and everybody's contribution both giving and taking along all orders in the chain of being is essential to the preservation of the whole.

And it's only within the whole, the full range of planets from holy sun absolute right down to the moon, that you are going to find the real fullness and meaning and ultimate safety of yourself.

So the sooner you get over it, I mean many of us when we were working with Joseph this time and got introduced to the doubling exercises, it's come for everybody in the group as a kind of liberation because you sense within it this inter-realistic dynamism and to discover the relationship between "je" and "moi" not as subject and object or inside or outside or this kind of objectification that, you know, Orage, God, love him brought into the work and was just rampant in the foundation groups.

You know, "Don't call it 'I', call it 'it' - it's doing this, it's doing this, it's doing this."

And, you know, you may find that was useful for pedagogical purposes but God, what an invasion of responsibility and evasion of love.

I mean Thomas Keating was right back at it with his "Oh, it's just my little false self doing things."

You know, no, the whole thing becomes "I" in a deep way but you just have to find the dynamism and you can't get out of it by scapegoating your "moi" and trying to shove it away.

It doesn't work that way.

It's going to be there right until the end because it's the instrument you play in.

So, yeah.

I think this morning, because I did not get it the first time we did 61, and the piece about you're observing yourself as a drop in glass.

And it definitely was a shock in a better state.

And the only way I could even observe that was to pour it in.

Yeah, good.

To drop the glass in.

Yeah.

And it completely triggered something years ago.

Matthew Wright gave a sermon and he said, "The Greek does not say, 'I give you the new commandment that you love one another.'

That the Greek actually says, 'I give you this new commandment so that you love one another,' which requires a different antecedent."

And the antecedent is getting on your knees and pouring out the water on the feet from the highest to the lowest.

And that's the model.

Yesterday you talked about how World 1 pours out into World 3.

And the whole pouring is the way you, this morning, that reconciliation between "I surrender" and "I am" was very experiential for me.

Good.

So thank you.

Yeah, that's great.

And you said something really lovely there about, you know, hold that thought that at first you felt a shock.

And that was a shock of dislocation when "moi" realizes that it's never going to be "I."

You know?

And you know, hell no, I'm not a drop in a glass.

I'm me.

So that's "moi" thinking.

I don't want to be nothing.

I don't want to be just an ant among ants, a mouse among mice.

But the interesting thing is that there is a place you can come to.

And when he's taken you through this wonderful drill of pulling yourself out from the top of your head and somehow kind of in equanimity regarding the whole thing, that that's okay.

I mean, you can be a drop, the need to be a special and different little drop disappears with the change of perspective.

And that's what we grow into.

And I think it's there that you find the ultimate resolution of the conflict.

So that's a real one.

The other thing to do, and we are going to work with pouring as the theme today that we're going to see.

But this afternoon, consider a set of exercises that all have as their theme pouring.

But the one thing that I think we need to realize and not let go of is that it's a mutual pouring.

It's easy to think of pouring from higher to lower because gravity works in that direction, at least in this world.

But we have to realize that there's a reciprocal pouring of lower to higher.

And that we're going to see, there's many of the exercises that we're not going to be into this time because, you know, even with somebody like who's trigger happy like me, there's only so many you can introduce at a time before people have assimilated.

But there's a whole bunch of them where we pull out of the stuff of our own body, our own first body, to pour into and build up the "I" just like he's sort of alluding to here.

So we pour into our own higher self and we pour our lives, our human, battered, fragile, quirky lives into the whole of the cosmos.

We're going to talk about that tomorrow.

So don't ever think of yourself as just being a receiver.

And don't think that your ultimate salvation or your ultimate meaning is going to be fulfilled by receiving.

It isn't.

It's by how you pay back, how you give in and through what you receive.

And I love that amendment, "I give you a new commandment so that you might love one another."

How do we enable something within that allows this to become possible, not just a dream?

So I would say to get back to the story, and thank you so much, Angel, for that commentary.

It's really good not only because of the accuracy of what you say, but because of your capacity in giving that observation, to speak about something that happened immediately and practically and how it lived in you.

That's what an observation is in the work.

Yeah, Andrew.

Oh, you're just stretching.

Thumbs up.

Yeah, yeah, you're right.

So I would say, continuing, because I'm going to circle back to this, but I'm not going to do it right now.

I would say that even in the history of the work, you've watched the work bounce back and forth between these two poles, what you would call one will and you can call the other receptivity.

And gathered around that first pole, the concentrative pole, are things such as will, aim, intention.

That's all there.

And gathered around the other pole, well, receptivity is what receptivity is.

It's waiting, listening, receiving.

And the work in just the however many years it's been since we've had it, maybe call it 100 years more or less, has wavered back and forth between those two poles.

And when we really open up the scene, I'm not going to talk about the '20s and '30s now because I don't want to get into a history of Gurdjieff, but when the scene opens on the Gurdjieff exercises in the 1940s, we're in Paris in the occupation.

Virtually all the exercises that we've received have Nazism in the backdrop.

And we're in a time when a massive collective psychological sickness is sweeping the planet.

And in Paris, where Gurdjieff is hunkered down, there's famine.

There's patrolled guards.

There's Jews and other targeted people routinely being removed from their apartments and disappearing from sight.

One of Gurdjieff's neighbors was in that category.

People are terrified.

People are scattered.

And Gurdjieff's own emphasis through most of these exercises is just on a plea to people to learn how to be the forces of will.

I wish to be.

I can be.

I have a right to be.

I have the power to be.

I would say the dominant motifs of this work, his concentration was on bringing people from the stage of [inaudible] to being able to be responsible, courageous, non-reactive individuals.

And that's where the epicenter was.

So when Gurdjieff died, a lot of the first generation students caught that.

And Joseph is certainly in that line because his teacher was George Adie, George and Helen, his wife.

And they came to Australia, bringing the teaching there.

And that teaching, the one that Joseph was introduced to, is very, very strongly steeped in that will, aim, intention, push, cold showers every morning, that kind of...

And when Madame de Salzman became the designated heir apparent, she introduced something that wasn't Joseph Azizi that gave it the name, the New Work.

I think that actually...

I think it was James Moore, I believe, that actually first used that title in his Gurdjieff book.

But the focus became much more on receptivity.

And this is the work as I was exposed to it in the Foundation groups that I worked with.

She, Madame, in a sense, turned the former exercises into periods that really looked like, aside from the fact that you were invoking the higher energies and the subtle substances in the room, the higher hydrogens, it was not distinguishable from Centering Prayer.

Instead of an exercise where you sat and worked and you placed your attention and you moved your attention, you allowed yourself to open to essentially the providential nature and the caring nature of the higher fields and receive.

So receptivity became much more featured in the program.

And Madame removed, or had removed, certainly a lot of the emphasis on the place that the exercises held in the whole sphere of the things.

And she took away, I mean, the doubling exercises disappeared, a lot of other exercises disappeared, I think in a way to make it more manageable and more respectable in a post-war age.

But of course what happened with Joseph is that since he was not exposed to this line, but there were teachers who caught a different flavor of it.

Madame was one of Gurdjieff's students, but there were also people like Jane Heap, Helen Lannis, amazing how many women, Annie Stavely, and J.G.

Bennett.

And all of these people who worked and sat at the feet of Gurdjieff and drank and ate at his table during the final days of his life brought in their own way their own center of fusion between these two poles.

And as we worked at the reunion of the tribes of Israel nowadays, as the various lineages of the work realized they've got to sort of get together and put the pieces of the

puzzle together that each one carries, you begin to see, I think, a necessary and a beautiful balancing.

The Bennett line I'm not going to talk a lot about because I never actually fell into the pool of it.

I've always worked right on the edge of it and I deeply admire both the vision, the cosmic vision, and the altruistic emphasis that's in the Bennett work, which you absolutely don't find in the Foundation groups.

Annie Stavely's material will have a second run because the group at Two Rivers has just brought out a collected volume of her work.

She's amazing.

Jane Heap is amazing.

But to realize there are different voices and they're all struggling around these balances.

We might talk about that more later.

But what I want to talk about as this balances is where do we begin?

If you say these two joysticks are aim, there's surrender, will and surrender, which way, which one do you apply as the bottom line?

I think at the beginning that you can't do either or.

Absolutely forbidden.

You can't say, "Oh, I'm a will person."

You can't say, "Oh, I'm a surrender person."

We watch this clash or this creative tension even within the six people in the Azizi group.

Joseph brings a big swing back to that aim, will, athleticism phase of it, in which I often feel completely out in the left field with a kind of what interests me in these exercises is how the surrender and the opening is expressed in the outpouring.

But I would say that if you need both, and as Vesna said quite correctly, there needs to be a self-formed, some random little I among the 987 is never going to be the one that carries the show.

Probably the most dangerous one of all is the one you identify as your soul.

Because where your soul is...

I once read a line in Nicoll that absolutely shocked me, and I've never been able to find it again.

Somewhere in those 1200 pages of commentary.

But he says, "Your soul is simply your point of greatest identification."

And I think he's 100% on target, and it's a really difficult truth.

We all go running off to our Enneagram of Personality workshops to tell what kind of a self am I, and there's this deep will to believe that I was created with a set of permanent personality characteristics, that God made me a different drop in the ocean from all the other drops, and that by understanding the nature of that drop, and by affirming it and developing it, that I come into my unique beingness.

It's bullshit.

Sorry.

This is the ultimate final fantasy of "moi."

And to learn to live well as a pointless point, and to get over this story that I was created to have a special being, and I was a special person, and I had this special being and this special vocation to exercise in this world, and when I get to the higher realms, whatever that is, that I'm going to be judged on how well I fulfilled this.

And even the sense of that what my real I is, is the extent to which I can develop and own and live into my soul story.

It's delusion.

But you're not going to be separated from it short of the gunpoint of death, whether that means physical death or dying before you die.

You're going to keep telling yourself the story, you're going to keep correcting back to "moi," which is going to tell you that no, really there is truly a Joan Fathergill and she's different from Rebecca Parker, and that it's in this vive la différence that God's going to recognize them both in heaven.

This is the source of spiritual materialism and it keeps us trapped in "moi" long after we've left the thing behind as the center of our identity.

And this is hard to say and everything in the psychotherapeutic professions is going to fight you tooth and nail on this.

Everything in the Christian tradition is going to fight you tooth and nail on this.

And that's why I'm going to tend to say that it may actually be the gateway between second body and third body.

We may not be able to do this in this, even in our Kesdjan self, until we reach that place where we know particularly that our identity is, as it says in the book of Colossians, hidden with Christ in God.

And that is truly okay in every part of our being.

We may not be able to get there even in our Kesdjan body, but please dear friends, begin to let the stranglehold of that myth go, because it's not true, finally.

And to the extent that you can see it and live into it, your "I" lives in your consciousness, not in the form and attributes that your consciousness takes.

It takes a long time to get used to that.

Questioner 2: I hear what you're saying, and I'm totally ready to experiment in that, the pouring into the ocean, or becoming a drop.

[Inaudible] [Inaudible] [Inaudible].

Is that what I'm saying?

Yeah, you need your differentiated "I."

It's a good instrument.

It's a very good instrument.

Or your differentiated "moi" really is, to do it accurately.

And you have to play it well.

But to learn, you play it well to the degree that you don't identify with it.

And that just keeps on going.

And so in the final analysis, when I consider where do I start, do I start on the surrender end of the pole, or do I start on the concentration end of the pole, recognizing that both are necessary, I will ultimately put my eggs in the basket of the surrender pole as the start and the basis to come back to.

And there's a physiological reason for this that my dear, esteemed colleague John Teasdale named in "What Happens in Mindfulness," this brilliant, brilliant book that I haven't yet been able to get people really interested in, in the network.

They don't see the point of it.

The point is jaw-droppingly in your face.

John works with neuroscience.

He works with Jon Kabat-Zinn and with all those people that are doing the sort of neurocognition things.

And it's quite simply that any motion of grabbing and concentrating locks you in the conceptual brain, the World 48 brain if you want it, and into instrumental processing, which means you do things strategically because you want something out of it.

And those two things, you can actually measure them on fMRI sort of stuff, makes it impossible.

It locks your brain.

It locks your being within your smaller self.

You can measure it.

That grabbing motion in any sort of way, that concentrating motion, will tend to lock you into the smaller cognitive self.

And the letting go self opens the gateway to spacious mind, as he calls it.

You can also call it Kesdjan selfhood, and non-instrumental thinking, which means that you can take your response and dialogue with reality that's right there.

His favorite image is of rock climbing, where you're free climbing up the hill, up a mountain.

It's 200 feet down is the bottom, and you don't have ropes on you.

And you're feeling your way along ledges and shelves.

And how do you do it?

You are so totally in the moment that you gain information from the rocks telling you where to put your hands next.

And so you make your way by a living dialogue with the thing you're working through.

We talked about trust today as the tool.

But it's the spacious mind, it's that capacity that opens up the possibility of receiving help from the collective.

So that's how we get back to your question, Edie.

I think each of the realms has its own collective.

And we know perfectly well in this realm, as we're standing on the threshold between imaginal and 48 self.

You see it on the music floor.

You give up without giving up, and you receive help.

And the group carries you where you can't go itself, not through collective madness, but through something else.

So it keeps refining and sublizing from there.

But I started the workshop in January with the question, "What's so bad about being food for the moon?"

And I did that deliberately because the Gurdjieff teaching has spoken rightly so about, you know, it's only despair and disgust and revulsion about the condition you're in when you see yourself and a desperate wish to be that will give you the motivation to move forward along this path.

But that when you begin to enter something out of those emotions of fear and revulsion and needing something desperately in order to be complete, you've already sealed your advancement because you're already taking it home.

And so you get these people that grow up in the work that are tremendously conscious, but have this deep sense that it's all on their back.

And at the moment they slack off their work, you know, they're food for the moon, it's like, "I don't want to be food for the moon."

What's so bad about being food for the moon?

Where are you going to go?

Is the moon out of God?

And what you really want to do is continue to be a conscious pixel, a viewing platform.

That's what you're screaming for.

But what would happen if you let that go and let God be God and let the all be the all?

And trust that whatever made you conscious within it to begin with, that that consciousness will be okay and that there's no need for you to ride on it.

And if you could hit that place of profound equanimity, the wager is that you would not stop working.

It's not like, "Oh well, this is all bullshit.

Let me just go drink three beers and then drink three more."

I don't think that self-preservation as a motivation for altruism ever finally works.

I think that what you have to do is just bypass the thing and out of your own profound powerlessness and resignation, act.

Because something in you that's deeper than you knows the whole and knows what's responsible.

Jerry May said in that beautiful line that as identification, as attachment, he said, ceases to be our motivation, our actions become reflections of compassion absolute.

And I think again and again the people who have tried this and taken it all the way discover that in that profound sense of powerlessness that that's okay.

What you might call in classic devotional language, which Thomas Keating learned, they meet Christ.

They meet some sort of an ultimate power of coherent love and compassion that carries not just their little them but the planet.

And what becomes most important in life is not to gain anything but not to fall out of alignment with it.

Because when it's there, the whole thing comes into a relational field that in every moment is giving and receiving the all.

Like when you're up there on this thing, the living dialogue with the surface.

So I think that's what we're facing.

And for me the most powerful part of this day is the beauty of the struggle in the garden, not my will but thine be done, oh Lord.

That's for me the heart of the Maundy Thursday.

Because I recognize "moi" wanting to live, recognizing the absolute validity of "moi's" wish and the human sadness to leave all that must be left and the heart that's heartbroken by the friends not being able to do things for them, not even to stay awake to accompany you in your grief.

A broken heart.

And then the other part that sees and recognizes is the cosmic necessity and rightness of what's to happen.

And we'll talk more about what's to happen tomorrow.

And to hold those two and know finally where it resolves.

Because the one resolution is dead ends.

The other resolution leads on.

And that's the struggle.

And the "in manus tuas patram," into your hands I commend thy spirit, is for me the sort of backbone around which all the other pieces.

I know then how to begin to concentrate because once I'm freed from the delusion that I'm going to be improving this stupid little "mo"i so that it will grow up and become I, but that there is I pouring into it because it's needed for the work that I'm doing in this cosmos which is part of the whole work of the megalocosmos.

When I know that, okay, you get on with it.

So just a few lines from Father Thomas on his essay "Powerlessness," with which to think.

He says, "Powerlessness is our greatest treasure.

Don't try to get rid of it.

Everything in us wants to get rid of it.

Grace is sufficient for you, but not something you can understand.

To be in too big a hurry to get over our difficulties is a mistake because we don't know how valuable they are from God's perspective.

Without them, we might never be transformed as deeply and as thoroughly.

If everything else fails, the dying process is the place where we will have no choice but to go through the transformation process because everything is in fact taken away.

The spiritual journey is the commitment to allow everything we possess to be taken away before the dying process begins.

This makes us of enormous value to ourselves and to others because we have anticipated death.

And death is not the end, but the beginning of the fullness of transformation.

If we were born, we've already been through a facsimile of death and our body is well prepared for the final translation or transition, as some prefer to tell it.

Dying before you die.

As Thomas says in one of his last poems, "Powerlessness is my daily bread."

And for him, it's the sacrament of powerlessness that is conferred on this holy night and in the struggle with Gethsemani.

So stay with that for a while today and see how...

Wrestle with your own love for the work and your own love for the laying down aspect and see how they come to the synthesis in your own body being today as it lives out in what we do today.

[CLEARING THROAT]