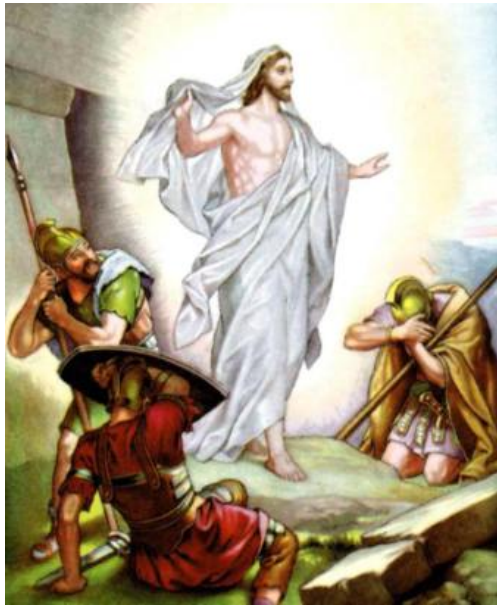


FAST FOOD: Fortieth Helping (2016)



“On all arable soil in the world we grow grain over tombs. The dead outnumber the living in a ratio of approximately 14 to 1. The estimate of the total number of persons ever born is about 85 billion. 78 billion of them are dead. 7 billion, a segment of which we are part, currently alive for a time. The dead will always outnumber the living.”

—ANNIE DILLARD

Does Jesus’ teaching by word and deed of Nonviolent Love of all in all situations have any relation to the above facts? Does it have any relation to the dead and soon to be dead?

Maybe an avenue to go down to search for an answer to this question is to ask whether the way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies that Jesus lived and taught has any relation to His resurrection? I would offer that it most certainly does. I would say that the relation between the two is intrinsic and essential. Without the struggle to faithfully live according to the Way of Nonviolent Love of all under all circumstances there is no resurrection. It is this Way, that Jesus knew was the Way of the Father in heaven—His Father and our Father—and therefore in the face of all temptations to go another way, to this Way He had to be obedient without reservation.

Jesus knew that only the Father can truthfully say, “I AM.” Only the Father has absolute existence. The Father and the Father alone is absolute life. All other forms of existence and life can only say, “I am,” because I AM exists. Therefore, it is the Father who knows what life is, what makes for life, what is the Way of life to life. Obedience to, choosing to follow, His Way, His Will, His Word, is the Way, the only Way that results in reaching life in all its fullness in Life In All Its Fullness. The Father’s Way is the only Way to the Father.

So that every human being can eternally have the fullness of life within the Eternal Fullness of Life, the Father, “*who is love (agapē)*,” sends His Word, His Only-Begotten Son, to become a

human being so as to reveal to humanity by His words and deeds the Way to the Father, to the fullness of life within the Eternal Fullness of Life. Rev. John L. McKenzie, the renowned Catholic Biblical scholar, writes in his book on the New Testament, *THE POWER AND THE WISDOM (Imprimatur)*,

*The power which destroys all other powers is the power of love, **the love of God revealed and active in Jesus Christ** [Emphasis added]. God revealed in Jesus that He loves man and will deliver him through love and through nothing else...The power of love is seen in the death of Jesus; it is seen more fully in His resurrection.*

Since there is no violence in Jesus in the Gospels, there can be no violence in the love He reveals as the Way to the Father, which means there can be no violence in the love that leads to resurrection, to the fullness of life in Life In All Its Fullness, God. This is so because “*violence and cruelty can have no part with God*” (THE ROMAN MISSAL, 1985, with *Imprimatur*, MASS FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE). Jesus, the Word of God Incarnate is Nonviolent because IAM, God, the Father is Nonviolent, that is—the Holy Trinity is Nonviolent—or more precisely is Nonviolent Love.

Outside of the “*Father of all*” there is no salvation, no conquering of death, no vanquishing of evil, no eternal banishment of suffering. With and within God, who is Nonviolent Love itself, death, evil and suffering are no more, only life in all its fullness.

It is through and to this Life, the Life of IAM, that Jesus rises from the tomb. It is to this Life that 78 billion “dry bones” long to be resurrected—as well as 7 billion currently “wet bones.” Jesus teaches and promises that this can happen because the power of Nonviolent Love as revealed by Him—but only the power of love as revealed by Him—destroys all powers averse to human beings being delivered from wickedness and its consequences and from all that short-circuits entering into the Fullness of Life for all eternity.

Christlike love is the power of God, which as said above, means it is almighty. Jesus does not explain how within the immense depth and breath, complexity and incomprehensibility of existence it works. He simply shows in His life and death, cross and resurrection that it does work and works in ways beyond all conceptions of the human mind. Because Nonviolent Love of all under all circumstances is the power of God, it is ultimately as far beyond human comprehension in its operation as God himself. As God *qua* God is an impenetrable Mystery, so also is the intrinsic power of His Nonviolent Love. What we do know by way of His Incarnate Word, Jesus, is “*that nothing is impossible*” for God’s Nonviolent Love.

The near total rejection in the Christian Churches and in the world at large of Jesus’ teaching of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies is, as noted before in these FAST FOOD HELPINGS, a manifestation of non-belief in Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, the Word of God made flesh, Lord, God, and Savior, as well as, in Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life. For to believe in Jesus as any or all of these necessitate believing Him. God and God’s Word do not lie about God’s will. But the refusal to believe Jesus has terrible negative consequences.

John L. McKenzie writes in his *THE POWER AND THE WISDOM*, “*The Christian knows that his love is the active presence of God in the world; if he lacks it,*

he takes away God's presence from the only place where he can put it. He has come between his neighbor and the saving love of Jesus Christ."

The spiritual and moral gravity of a Christian refusing to choose to follow Jesus' Way of Nonviolent Love in a situation is severe for the person to whom he or she is relating, as well as, to the person himself. The Christian is specifically chosen by Jesus and Baptized to release Christlike Nonviolent Love—which is the active presence and power of God—in this place at this time for this neighbor, and for other purposes and people within the mystery of human existence that are infinitely beyond his or her awareness and comprehension. As Jesus does not explain evil and death, but only tells us how to conquer them, so also He does not explain how love as He incarnates it conquers evil and death.

I have often heard Christians in both justified violence and nonviolent peace and justice groups say, *"I don't care about that 'pie in the sky after you die' stuff. I want Clinton elected or I want Trump elected or I don't want Bush elected or I do want Obama elected or I want this or that injustice corrected, and if that requires using means not consistent with the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels, e.g., violence, then that is what I will use to get the job done."*

This unconcern for 78 billion of brothers and sisters in the human family who have died and the 7 billion who will die in a short time seems self-evidently superficial and merciless. Not to ask the question, *"Is there any way I can be of help to my dead brothers and sisters,"* and not seriously seek an answer to that question, manifests an indifference to a possible intrinsic obligation a human being may have to other people just by being a human being. A human life is either always and in all circumstances sacred, or it is intrinsically of no account. It is all 78 billion, plus another 7 billion, which includes you and me, who are sacred or are just junk in the universe. It is inconceivable that it should be in some cases the one, and in some the other. Jesus teaches all are sacred because all are sons and daughters of the *"Father of all."* Because of this understanding of God as *Abba*, Jesus extends the idea of the "neighbor" who is to be loved as He loves to all God's sons and daughters, not just the people of Israel. The Divine Love (*agap *) of which He is the Incarnation is universal; no one is outside of it. That includes the 78 billion who have died, as well as, each sacred one of the 7 billion who have yet to die.

Jesus saves. "Yes!" But how does Jesus save? By merely the snap of the Divine finger? Obviously not. How does He save you and me and the other 7 billion people who are alive at the moment along with the 78 billion who have died? And, do you and I have a part to play in the salvation process? The answer again is, "Yes." We play our roll and meet our obligation to our fellow sons and daughters of God by placing Christlike love, which is the power of God to conquer evil and death and the only power that can conquer evil and death, in the places only we uniquely can put it, namely, in the multiplicity of places we, moment to moment, occupy as we traverse here and there on earth. The moment may be a moment of protesting an injustice or a moment of washing the dishes, but if it is done with Christlike love it has the power of God to save within it (1 Cor 13). Its salvific ripples will spread out and touch all God wants them to affect.

The two images of the Resurrection of Jesus at the beginning of this FAST FOOD HELPING are equally valid understandings of the same event. The one on the left is the typical image of the Resurrection one sees in Western Christianity. The one on the right is universally the image or

icon of the Resurrection one sees in Eastern Christianity. The Western image magnifies the physical resurrection of Jesus from the tomb with power and glory that render irrelevant the power and glory of this world; the soldiers of the kingdoms of the world are powerless in the presence of the triumph of the Christ Jesus of Nonviolent Love. The Eastern icon magnifies the power and wisdom and mercy of the glory of God made visible in Christ Jesus reaching back in time and space to lift Adam and Eve from their tombs and deliver them and 78 billion others from the bondage of Hades. Note the black space below the cross on which Jesus stands with its broken chains and bars and keys, and evil itself, bound so it can never contaminate human existence again. And emanating from and through both the Western and Eastern images of the Resurrections is this great truth: The Nonviolent Love of all in all situations in history in imitation of the Jesus of the Gospels saves—if given a chance to save.

I would ask Christians, their Churches and their Churches leaders, and Christian peace and justice groups and programs to stop presenting Jesus' Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies as if it were just some secular or philosophical idea or political strategy and tactic with a prayer attached to it. Nonviolence in Christianity is a clarifying adjective, not a noun. To be clear, in terms of Jesus' teaching by word and deed nonviolence devoid of intentionally chosen Christlike love as its Spirit and motive is of no more ultimate and salvific use to humanity than violence masquerading as Christic love (1 Cor 13). If it is not the Nonviolent Love of all that is God's Life that one wishes to be about say that clearly, and then do whatever you wish. But don't tag something other than Gospel Nonviolent Love as the Nonviolence of the Gospel. There is too much at stake for all people, past and present, to engage in such intentional falsification and obfuscation. Conflating and blurring the Nonviolence of the Gospel with other understandings of nonviolence that do not essentially include Christlike Nonviolent Love as revealed in the Gospels may get Clinton or Trump elected, or may get a particular injustice corrected but it will continue the process that murdered the people of Nagasaki, Edith Stein and Franz Jagerstatter on August 9th so many decades ago. It will also continue the diabolical false witness of Christians killing Christians believing they are following Christ as happened on August 9th so many decades ago. And its end result will be to fill the tombs, not empty them.

—EMMANUEL CHARLES MCCARTHY

Today's and all prior 2016 Fast Food Helpings are available at this URL:

<https://goo.gl/C92GN8>

and on these websites:

www.centerforchristiannonviolence.org or www.emmanuelcharlesmccarthy.org