

VAIHARAI

(The Dawn)

A Theological Quarterly

Vol.9 No.3

September 2004

Issue Editor: Fr. C. Camillus SDB

Contents

	Editorial	1
1.	Spirituality is Value Based Integrated Daily Living - Fr. C. Camillus SDB	4
2.	Spirituality is Being Completely Human - Fr. Maria Arul Selvam	13
3.	Spirituality of the Subalterns - Dr. James Ponnaiah	32
4.	God Experience in the Beauty of Art Forms - Dr. Thomas D'Sa	59



VAIHARAI

(The Dawn)

A Theological Quarterly

Vol.9 No.3

September 2004

SPIRITUALITY OR RELIGIOSITY

Why is it that religion that is supposed to preach peace, brotherhood, unity and harmony becomes a source of hatred and violence? The MASJID-MANDIR dispute is not the first instance when untold atrocities and violence have been committed in the name of religion. To understand this paradox we need to make a distinction between spirituality and religiosity. Spirituality is a vision of life with a system of values and goals that orient and guide one's life. It is the result of an experience of God, of human and of the world. Founders of all major religions had such an experience. Religiosity on the other hand is excessive adherence to the external practices of religion.

The spiritual experience is basically the same for all since it is experience of the same God, the same human and of the same world. God being by nature unknowable, each one's experience of God will emphasize one or other aspect of Godhead, depending on the cultural, geographic and socio-economic situations in which one lives. In Christ we see the mercy of God highlighted; in prophet Mohammed we hear the call for social justice to the children of God; and in the Rishis of India we see the immanent presence of God in all beings. All these experiences are many, mutually complementary, interrelated, integrated and involved in daily experiences shaped by life, love, culture and theology. Of course, the uniqueness of Jesus Christ is in no way denied. This is the substance of the article "Spirituality is value based integrated daily living" written by me.

2

For ages spirituality has been understood mostly as praying and worshipping. It was regarded as a mental process and leading a moral life by observing the commandments. But today we realize that spirituality is holistic embracing the totality of a person's existence, including one's relationship with others and with the material world, a notion coextensive with day-to-day life itself, finding every human concern as relevant.

Modern media, IT and globalization, liberalization forces are placing a threat to our unity and sanctity. The glaring reality of the vast multitude of the poor, the varied deprivation, dehumanization, rampant corruption and injustice lead us to examine deeply the status of the subalterns. Knowledge of their culture, customs, spirituality and rituals will help us to understand them and offer them help. Dr. James Ponniah explores into this and presents us a spirituality that is people oriented and action based, which builds up people, instills hope and rejuvenates life.

Asia is steeped in the sense of the sacred. We sense a cosmic worldview in the holistic approach to life with rich cultural diversity expressed in art, architecture, music and rich classical and folk traditions. Fr. Thomas D' sa proposes a God experience in the beauty of art forms. Beauty according to him is not only in the face of pretty models and latest fashions but also in the innocent face of a child and in the compassionate heart of a woman. Those who have their delight in the art forms like dance, art, music will naturally be led to come closer to the divine and fuller to the human.

"DUC IN ALTUM". Jesus one day after speaking to the crowds from Simon's boat invited the apostles to put into the deep his boat for a catch. Peter and his companions trusted in Christ's words and when they did so they had a great catch.

Today the Lord invites us who are intimate with Jesus, involved in his mission to do the same. We are exhorted to go deep into the sea of our self. We will find fresh enthusiasm for our spiritual life. It is not being settled on minimalistic ethic or shallow religiosity. The ways of holiness and spirituality are many and varied according to the vocation of each individual. The daily ordinary joyful living can enhance this. Spirituality demands intense spiritual commitment and personal purification. Despite widespread secularization, let us not forget there is a great demand for spirituality.

I am grateful to Fr. D. Alphonse for contacting several scholars and getting the above articles for this issue of Vaiharai. I thank Fr. Maria Arul Selvam, Dr. Thomas D'sa and Dr. James Ponnaiah for their painstaking efforts in preparing the thought provoking articles contained in this Vaiharai issue.

-Fr. C. Camillus SDB