

Fr. Perozich comments —

*Even when I am unaware, there are life processes at work in my body. “Your autonomic nervous system is a part of your overall **nervous system** that controls the automatic functions of your body that you need to survive. These are processes you don’t think about and that your brain manages while you’re awake or asleep.” — Cleveland clinic*

I am aware of them sometimes when I exercise, have finished digesting, come into a bright light from a dark place, as a few examples.

Amy Knight gives a good reflection on the life hidden in Christ which is active even when one may not be aware. It is good to think about the spiritual life just as the bodily one to see the process of transformation in us by Jesus.

Just as digestion in the body absorbs what is good and purges what is unnecessary, the soul is undergoing a similar hidden process.

I have to admit that I have not yet come to the place of full purgation of the evil and of the world in order to be alone with Jesus.

Still I trust that He is working within me, my life hidden in Him, to purify my soul in order that I desire nothing but Him Alone.

*Colossians 3. “If you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and **your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.** Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry. Stop lying to one another, since you have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed, for knowledge, in the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all and in all.*



Letters Of St. Paul Of The Cross: “Remain Wholly Concealed”

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“Now, therefore, please remain wholly concealed in the crucified Jesus, with no other desire but to be completely changed by love and do his good pleasure. You will see, at the opportune time, the opening of a great scene, and a great star will rise which will be the harbinger of a very clear day, a day with a brilliant sun that will not make any shadow and with its vital warmth will cause the vanishing of mountains of snow. I write you this enigma; you’ll understand it at the proper time.” (The Mysticism of the Passion in St Paul of the Cross, Ignatius Press, p. 285)

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Then Moses said, “I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.”

Exodus 3:1-3

Seasons of anonymity and hiddenness are necessary in the process of transformation of our inner man into the fullness of Christ. Without this time of being “concealed in the crucified Jesus,” the fullness cannot come. The hidden years are given as an example in the Lord’s own life for thirty years. The Word says in Luke 2:52 that **“Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” This increase happened in the hidden years.** There are countless biblical examples of men and women of God formed in the **hidden place** including Joseph in prison, Paul in Damascus, Moses in the desert, David in the caves and many more.

The hidden years are “crucifying” in the sense that this anonymity kills selfish ambition and self-driven agendas that are mostly unseen by ourselves. The hidden wilderness season is meant to drive out all that hinders Love and foster a complete and total dependence on God alone. Being “concealed in the crucified Jesus” is a phrase that speaks of this hidden place.

This place is a place of death and birth *in that order.*

What St Paul of the Cross speaks of in the term **mystical death** is that fortunate place where **the soul is completely purged of itself and emptied of the agenda of self-interests. Death to self at the highest level happens in the hidden place—usually years—where the soul gives up on everything, even the calling and destiny of God, and submits to the dealings of God in the interior part where the soul is being transformed into Christ on the inside.**

The soul comes to a place in this process where it gives up on every other thing and indeed does not even want anything apart from God Himself. The thought of doing ministry or moving forward in any capacity becomes a nauseating thought **unless the Lord Himself is leading that way.** (Moses: “If Your Presence does not go *with us*, do not bring us up from here.”[i]) The soul actually comes to believe that this season is for a lifetime and will not ever end, and the soul is actually at peace with that place. In fact, the soul comes to love the place of being alone with Alone and never more cares anything for the outside life.

The full maturity of the soul in this place happens unbeknownst to the soul and that time—known only to God—is the needed place in the journey where a shift happens. This shift can be called mystical birth. The

process of transformation is over and **the birthing comes about in the soul where Christ is able to live His life in and through the soul to the world.** This moment is the moment where a “harbinger,” or sign, is manifest to the soul. When Jesus was born, the sign was the star; for Moses, the harbinger was the burning bush. The burning bush was the sign that pointed to the shift in season and had supernatural power to bring about the change that God was wanting. For Moses—and for most people—the shift is bittersweet. Moses found his life in the hidden place and he did not want to move out into his calling, but the Spirit of God through the burning bush compels him to obey and move forward. **The soul takes no confidence in itself for it has a history of failure, yet God compels the soul and even puts pressure on the soul to move forward out of hiddenness and into the public arena.**

For Jesus, this harbinger moment came at the wedding of Cana when God used His mother to pressure Him to move forward into the public arena and do the miracle of water to wine. Even Jesus appears to not want to do this. The compelling factor for Jesus, orchestrated by His Father, is that He is witnessing a wedding and no doubt is thinking about His Bride and the Wedding Supper to come in His own life. This foresight and longing in His own heart for His Bride causes Him to do the miracle and forge into the public arena and head toward His destiny of the Cross.

Mystical death unto mystical birth of Christ in the soul with a sign, a harbinger, marking the place—this is for every believer. This transformation is our greatest joy and privilege. This mystical death and subsequent birth are impossible apart from God and this transformation is necessary for fruitfulness in our lives in Christ. **St Paul of the Cross’s word to remain “concealed in the crucified Jesus” is the path to the birthing of the resurrected**

life in Christ that is open to us if indeed we “remain in Him.”

[i] Exodus 33:15

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