

Dear People Whom God Loves,

## **SEEING WITH NEW EYES**

I call your attention to a new book by Fr. Richard Rohr "Yes, and...Daily Meditations". It contains beautiful gems –usually on less than one page.

I recommend it to you. We also have copies of it in our library, which is open after the 10am mass the first Sunday of the month in the parish center at 395 Superior Street.

Absorbing the book can enable us to look at religion in a way that is very different. It can help us realize that at its depth religion is not believing stuff or doing stuff (though these have a place) but being transformed into a new vision.

Here is a quote from the book (pp 357-359). Spiritual things," as we call them, always have a character of mystery, seeming contradiction, awesomeness, invisibility, or a kind of impossibility to them. That is exactly why we call them spiritual!...Organized religion makes for a highly communicable message, one that is much more accessible and often more attractive, that allows us to take great things in necessarily small doses and created a sharable and sacred language that we could all agree upon and talk about in a hushed or authoritative voice. It also creates a lot of backlash from those who hate or fear symbolism, because it all seems so fanciful to them. This has largely been the case since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the countries that were influenced by what was called the Enlightenment and now the rest of the world, which they in great part colonized. But organized religion also created *fast food religion* that did not make actual God experience needed or even available to most people. They just believed things or belonged to so-called special and superior groups. Transformation of self or transformation of consciousness was not deemed necessary, except at a few artificial behavioral levels. (We fast on this day." "We don't drink alcohol or caffeine." "We attend this kind of service.") Such agreed upon practices were very good for creating a kind of social order in a country, but in and of themselves they did not lead people to any deep experience of union with God-or themselves...As many have said in varying ways, you can (1) Do the old thing with the old mind (conservatives), (2) Do a new thing with the old mind (liberals), or (3) *Do a new thing with a new mind*. Only the third way deserves to be called authentic religion. The other two stances often avoid the necessary dying to self, which is called transformation. The new mind could be called the contemplative mind. The new thing is always love-at ever deeper levels...Many of us now use the word *contemplation* to describe this new mind or alternative consciousness. The single most precise way to describe this mind is that it sees things in a non-dual way, which is precisely why holy people can love enemies, overlook offenses, see things as paradoxical without giving up their reason, and believe in Jesus as both fully human and fully divine at the same time. Frankly, without the contemplative mind almost all major religious doctrines and dogmas are just silly nonsense, and worse, they are not even helpful to humanity-or God! With the contemplative mind,

things like forgiveness, love, embracing the outsider, surrender to Mystery, and the integration of contradictory ego and shadow all become possible and even attractive. Now the goal of all religion is in sight-actual union with what is. And what is is called God.

Smile, God loves you,  
Father Clay

