

Easter Message to People of St. Stan's and All Who are Interested

This message is my understanding of the words of Father Karl Rahner. Father Rahner was one of the great Catholic theologians of the 20th century. These are his words as I remember them: "We will all become mystics or we will be nothing at all."

1. We will see that we will no longer be divided into liberals and conservatives in the way we are today.
2. We will see that we will no longer use rewards and punishments as a means to help people lead good lives.
3. We will see that merciful love is what we are called to be as Christians.
4. We will see that we will draw people to be Christian by living merciful love ourselves.
5. We will realize that this is something that we cannot do ourselves.
6. We will realize that God, who is Merciful Love, can do it in us if we are willing.
7. We will realize that Merciful Love will help us to be willing.
8. We will realize that everything is a gift from God.
9. We will realize that in this world mystery remains. We will trust.
10. We will realize that trusting in God makes more sense than merely trusting in ourselves.

So often, we liberals and conservatives think that our way is the right way. We only follow our way and don't listen to the other side. When we become mystics, we will know we have much to learn and we will be eager to listen to the other side. We will all have different perspectives because we all have different histories. That is good. We will have many opportunities to learn.

If I am helpful to you because a friend tells me that he will give me a million dollars, I am not helping you because I love you; I just want the reward of a million dollars. If another friend tells me that if I don't help you he will break my legs, I am helping you because I want my legs intact. I help you, not because I love you, but because I don't want the punishment. I see being willing to be drawn into love as more valuable and powerful than rewards and punishments. The motive for the works of mercy is Merciful Love. God is Merciful Love.

When we begin to believe that God is Merciful Love and that Jesus lived merciful love, we will then likely learn to live merciful love with no concerns about rewards or punishments.

When we see ourselves more deeply, we will see our goodness and see the ways in which we have sinned. We will also see that we would have sinned more but that we were prevented from doing so with God's help. This insight will help us to realize that our living well is only by the grace of God. When we see ourselves more deeply, it helps us not to think that we are better than others and not to compare ourselves to others.

At the same time, we are graced to realize that we are not the ones who are the source of merciful love, but that the merciful love is flowing through us. That is a blessing that we are grateful to have been given. The words that I use are these. I am a rusty old pipe. I may be a rusty old pipe, but the divine love that flows through this rusty old pipe is clean, healing and