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Christian Perspectives

(The following extracts are taken from the discourses given by Anthony De Mello, a Jesuit spiritual director. He was a great Retreat preacher who directed a large number of Retreats and conducted many workshops both for lay faithful as well as for the Christian leaders/ministers. Some of the ideas expressed may sound bit ?out of tune' but if we read them and reflect, it can bring us new insight into living renewed and refreshed lives meaningfully. Remember, it was delivered in discourses. So it is written as it was spoken, in colloquial way - Rev Paul Mathew)

?AWARENESS ? By Anthony De Mello

On Waking Up

Spirituality means waking up. Most people, even though they don't know it, are asleep. They're born asleep, they live asleep, they marry in their sleep, they die in their sleep without ever waking up. They never understand the loveliness and the beauty of this thing that we call human existence. You know, all mystics - both Christian and other, no matter what their theology, no matter what their religion - are unanimous on one thing: that all is well, all is well. Though everything is a mess, all is well. Strange paradox, to be sure. But, tragically, most people never get to see that all is well because they are asleep. They are having a nightmare.

Last year on Spanish television I heard a story about this mother who knocks on her son's door. ?Jaime?, she says, ?wake up?! Jaime answers, ?I don't want to get up. Mom?. The mother shouts, ?Get up, you have to go to school?. Jaime says, ?I don't want to go to school?. ?Why not?? asks the mother. ?Three reasons?, says Jaime. ?First, because it's so dull; second, the kids tease me; and third, I hate school?. And the mother says, ?Well, I am going to give you three reasons why you must go to school. First, because it is your duty; second, because you are forty-five years old, and third, because you are the headmaster?. Wake up, wake up! You've grown up. You're too big to be asleep. Wake up! Stop playing with your toys.

Most people tell you they want to get out of kindergarten, but don't believe them. Don't believe them! All they want you to do is to mend their broken toys. ?Give me back my husband/wife. Give me back my job. Give me back my money. Give me back my reputation, my success?. This is what they want; they want their toys replaced. That's all. Even the best psychologist will tell you that, that people don't really want to be cured. What they want is relief; a cure is painful.

Waking up is unpleasant, you know. You are nice and comfortable in bed. It's irritating to be woken up. That's the reason the wise guru will not attempt to wake people up. I hope I ?m going to be wise here and make no attempt whatsoever to wake you up if you are asleep. It is really none of my business, even though I say to you at times, ?Wake up!? My business is to do my thing, to dance my dance. If you profit from it, fine; if you don't, too bad! As the Arabs say, ?The nature of rain is the same, but it makes thorns grow in the marshes and flowers in the gardens?.

(to be continued on January 3, 2019)

Rev. Paul Mathew