NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Caught between chaos and promise: Fr. Albert Nolan -- Part 5

NCR Podcasts | Aug. 27, 2009

Fr. Albert Nolan

Episode 5: In the presence of colossal mystery (21 min.)
"Everything is a mystery." That doesn?t mean, Nolan explains, that everything is disappointing because can?t know it. "Rather, it is recognizing that we don?t know, but it is so much bigger, greater, grander than anything we do know," he tells Tom Fox. Being "in the presence of colossal mystery ? leads to a kind of attitude of praise and worship and adoration, but then also to the recognition that the mystery loves me and you and everybody else. So, it is a mystery of love."

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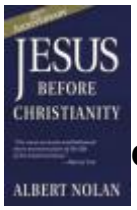

Caught between chaos and promise

"More and more people, and especially young people, have given up all the certainties of the past: religious certainties, scientific certainties, cultural certainties, political certainties and historical certainties," wrote Dominican Fr. Albert Nolan in his book Jesus Today. This has left us with a great hunger for the spiritual and the religious, he tells Tom Fox. This could be a tremendous opportunity, he continues. "We have a whole new way of understanding the universe, and therefore, understanding ourselves, who we are and how we fit in that has great potential for the future ... However, at the same time, we are going headlong into more and more selfishness and individualism." We are caught, he says, between chaos and promise.

More about Fr. Albert Nolan

Dominican Fr. Albert Nolan, 73, was born in Cape Town, South Africa as a fourth-generation South African of English descent. Reading the works of Thomas Merton, Nolan became attracted to the idea of religious life. Eventually he joined the Dominican Order in 1954, and studied in South Africa and Rome, where he received a doctorate. From 1976 to 1984, he was Vicar-General of the Dominicans in South Africa. In 1984, he was elected the Master of the Dominican Order. He however declined the office which would have meant transferring to his order's
Rome headquarters, preferring to remain in South Africa during this decade of intense political and social transition. In the 1990s, as a result of his conviction that theology must come from the grassroots level and not an academic, he started a radical church magazine called Challenge, of which he was the editor for many years. From 2000-2004, Nolan served a third term as Vicar-General of the Dominicans in South Africa.He is the author of *Jesus Before Christianity*, which is the best selling book ever published by Orbis Books, and last year, *Jesus Today, A Spirituality of Radical Freedom*.

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