

## What is the organ that sees the invisible?

Michael Leach | Nov. 5, 2013 Soul Seeing

It is two years ago that Soul Seeing first appeared in *NCR* with "Christ and cerebral palsy." I quoted Dr. Thomas Hora, a psychiatrist who was the best spiritual teacher I ever had:

There is more to man than meets the eye. We all have the faculty to discern spiritual qualities in the world. We can see honesty; we can see integrity; we can see beauty; we can see love; we can see goodness; we can see joy; we can see peace; we can see harmony; we can see intelligence; and so forth. None of these things has any form; none of these things can be imagined; none of these things is tangible, and yet they can be seen. What is the organ that sees these invisible things? Some people call it the soul, spirit, or consciousness. Man is a spiritual being endowed with spiritual faculties of perception.

I ended the column with a prayer:

Jesus, the next time I see someone with what doctors call cerebral palsy or Down syndrome, grace me with the sight to realize what is really there: goodness, innocence, love, joy, intelligence, and abundant beauty. You embraced lepers and felt purity and the scales fell from their faces. Help me to know, right now: When I look at anyone, I am looking at myself, I am looking at you, for all of us, each of us, is a spiritual aspect of you and only you! God bless everyone! I close my eyes now and remember someone I've passed by or ignored and ask you to see love for me. I am learning that I can behold you and everyone with the same eyes that you behold us. I am going to sit still now and listen -- and see.

"Soul Seeing" began with a phone conversation with the editors of *NCR*. They asked if I'd be interested in writing a regular column. I brought up soul seeing as a way of looking at life in way not much explored in the pages of *NCR* or anywhere, and suggested that I write one column a month and ask friends to write the other. The editors asked for a brief description. I sent this:

This biweekly column is about seeing God, the world and ourselves with the eye of the soul. It is not about changing the world, but changing the way we see the world. Each column is a spiritual reflection on the beauty that hides behind appearances and the peace that is beyond all understanding.

Since then, 55 "Soul Seeing" columns have invited readers to perceive the spiritual that is within us and around us: to see the kingdom of heaven in a car wash, hear the music of life on an R train, taste Eucharist in a basket of biscuits shared by famished children in Ethiopia, and feel the touch of angels' wings in the stillness of a radiation room. We have endeavored to read the Bible with the eye of the soul, and listen to the "still, small voice" of God with the same ear God hears us. We stretched our souls with the "old yoga ladies" at a senior center in Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y., and danced with a leper in Africa as she danced in gratitude for a new bed. We embraced hugs as an outward sign of inner grace and, God help us, even sipped Scotch at midnight with Morrie, the lovable bishop of Paris, Kan. Each column has encouraged us to do just one thing: cultivate this sixth sense God has implanted in each of us, a GPS system back to Eden we call "soul seeing."

Soul seeing is as old and comfortable as the tunic Paul wore on his visits to the Christian communities. "Don't

be interested in the troubles you can see now," he told them, "but be interested in the things that cannot be seen. For the things you see now will soon be gone, but the things you cannot see will last forever."

St. Augustine knew what Paul was talking about. "Late have I loved thee, O Beauty so ancient and so new," he cried, "late have I loved you! You flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness!" It is never too late to be interested in the grace of soul seeing.

In the 13th century, St. Bonaventure encouraged students to see with the eyes of the soul. In the 20th, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin said his mission in life was to help people see, and stirred us to look through appearances and contemplate "the chosen part of things." Hora defined prayer as "an endeavor to behold what is real." Despite appearances and even in suffering, we have the capacity to behold "peace, assurance, gratitude, and love," he taught.

It is the memory of those moments, rare, ancient and new, that keep us going now.

[Michael Leach invites you to share insights or quotes or an experience of soul seeing in the comments section and thanks you for following Soul Seeing.]

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