

There is a tendency to take any disturbing emotion and then try to make it fit as psychological pathology. However, not all disturbing emotions necessarily are indicative of an issue that needs therapy. There are emotions that point to other needs because they arise from human beings existential issues which become profound questions:

What happens after death?

How do I handle a threat to my freedom?

What should I do about loneliness?

And the real big one: What is the meaning of my life?

This is why religious language is necessary. The word religion literally means to tie together. What are we tying together? We are trying to tie together our understanding of meaning.

This is done so brilliantly in today's Gospel, this opening to the Gospel of John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Three times: The Word; the Word; the Word.

An ancient Greek concept of an eternal and unchanging truth. It was present at the time of creation and is available now to every individual who seeks it. It reconciles the human with the divine. And we can know that because it is truth that is made known through a language we can understand.

God desires to speak to us and we can understand what God is saying. And what is this language we understand? It is an elemental desire within us. It is the desire for loving relationship. And through this loving relationship God gave to us, "power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God."

But there is something else about the Word. John wrote that the "Word became Flesh and lived among us." ... the Word became flesh; in these four words, John summarizes in religious language not only something profound – but in four words we can actually remember it!

John is saying that a union has occurred between the human and the divine, or the personal and the absolute. God's logos, the Word is Christ, and acts as a bridge between the human's inner spiritual needs and the answer to those needs.

The promise here is not merely to experience transcendence, but to actually become transcendent. This religious language from John ties up and binds together the answers to our most profound questions.

We are promised the life of God, the freedom of God, loving relationships with others who are too children of God and loving relationship with God so deep that Paul's insight is that in the deepest places of our hearts we call out in trust to God as our loving parent.

Yet how does God communicate to us that we are children of God? By becoming a child! God truly comes down from heaven. He becomes a child and puts himself in the state of complete dependence of a newborn child.

The Word who created all things, on whom we all depend, makes himself small and in need of human love. God is a homeless child; a child totally in need of love. And through God as child we can know who God our parent is.

John writes, "It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known." The invisible true God becomes visible when the eyes of our hearts are opened to see this homeless child in the stable of Bethlehem.

When God is seen as all-powerful then fear can become a form of resistance against God in our hearts and in our own being our freedom is felt threatened. In the birth of Jesus, God chose to become a child. He made himself dependent and weak, in need of our love. Now – this God who has become a child says to us – "you can no longer fear me, you can only love me". Every infant asks for our love. There is no infant who asks for love from some but not others.

But Christ is not just in one time and in one place. Christ was not connected to history only at Jesus birth.

Through becoming human all humans have become connected to God in a new way. Christ continues to be connected to history through every human being. God continues to choose to ask for our love.

Through God as child we can know who God our parent is, but we can also know who we really are.

Years ago, Brother Roger of the Taizé community in France spent time with Mother Teresa in Calcutta. Just before he was about to leave, Mother Teresa found a baby abandoned in the streets of Calcutta. She picked up the baby and put it in Brother Roger's arms. She told him to take the baby back to France because there was the possibility of hope for the baby there.

I wonder if he had hesitations. I never heard that he did, but I suppose if Mother Teresa did that it would be hard to come up with a convincing excuse not to accept the baby. He said that on his way back to France on the plane he held the baby the entire time. She was emaciated, sick and near death.

Back at Taizé he kept her close to him at all times. He spoke to her gently. At first she ate nothing, but later took a little food. He didn't know whether she would live or die.

Imagine that, an abbot of a religious community a parent of a baby!

Brother Roger's sister lived very close by and they shared the responsibilities of raising Marie. She grew to be healthy and strong. And she knew she was loved.

What Teresa of Calcutta and Roger of Taizé always believed was that within every human being God was present longing to be loved.

God is our loving parent to whom we can call out to in trust. And God in the mystery of Christmas longs for our love as a defenseless dependent child.

This is why the Christmas message, about the Word is a message of hope – the heart of the Christmas message – is meant *for all* people.

Jesus was born for everyone to everyone, so that each person and every human situation may come to know the power of God's saving grace, which alone can answer our most profound questions and show us the truth of today's Gospel.

Not only do we need not fear God – perhaps even more incredible *God actually trusts us!* God can trust us because God gave us “power to become children of God”. This is religious language that answers our deepest questions and gives meaning to our lives.