

My Unificationist Memoirs Chapter 62

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Casa Maria Catholic Worker House in Milwaukee WI

The Roman Catholic Catechism describes a sacrament as an "outward sign of an inward grace." To perceive the reality of a sacrament, one must be predisposed by grace, otherwise, the material accidents composing the sign will be the totality of one's perception. If indisposed, rather than seeing "the Body of Christ," only ordinary bread and wine appear visible. Put in other terms, our deepest faculty of sight resides in our heart and if we lose our center, we forfeit our depth perception.

This truth extends beyond the sacramental. When, in the Book of Acts, Stephen is stoned to death by Saul, the Heavens opened for Stephen, his brothers and sisters in faith witnessed Christianity's first martyr, but Saul saw only a blasphemer. Saul's heart remained closed to the grace residing in that moment, his theological concepts and angry, judgmental heart blinded him, blocking his access to a deeper perception.

When we accepted Divine Principle and True Parents, we immediately became a card in a Heavenly Rorschach Test being administered to humanity. What people saw, disclosed their state of being.

Forgive me if I have shared this story elsewhere.

Prior to joining the Church, after leaving the monastery, I spent several months living and serving at the Casa Maria Catholic Worker House in Milwaukee. I held a part time job at a bookstore across from the Marquette University campus. Everyday, I would walk home from the book store and pass a home with bicycles stacked on a wooden front porch displaying an intriguing and beautiful red and white flag. I had never before seen the wheel-like symbol. Though drawn by my curiosity, I felt shy about approaching the house. So, I would walk on.

One afternoon, as I returned from work, a young woman approached me on the street. She witnessed to me very directly about the providential age we inhabited and encouraged me to come back with her to the "center" (what's that?) and hear a lecture on the New Truth being revealed. To my great misfortune, I had recently finished reading Hal Lindsey's "The Late Great Planet Earth." Every wondrous thing this sister related to me, I perceived as threatening and dark. Though I had not agreed with all of the book, it had infected my soul with a dark dose of apocalyptic paranoia. As Thomas Merton would say, I had slipped

into the "theology of the Devil." So much for my Rorschach Test! Where she drew designs of saints and angels, I saw only bats and gargoyles. I needed more humbling before my heart could see and my ears truly listen. I have often wondered who the sister was that witnessed to me, that late summer of 1973.

A great Rorschach moment for America was the "Forgive, Love, and Unite" Campaign. As I write this, simply recollecting the frenzied, vitriolic, and ill reasoned assault on True Parents and our movement, fed by the unrelenting and hysterical journalism of the New York Times and Washington Post, catches my breath and defies my comprehension. Like a very dark but effective Zen koan, the thought leaves me in a state of mental suspension. It's as though the entire country channeled the Twisted Sisters. How could that happen? Of course, the question is rhetorical and sadly, we know.

We embodied True Parents and brought their presence to every corner of this country, no matter how dark and neglected. We became the sacrament of God's Love given freely to the world. Yet, very often, people could not penetrate the physicality of the moment and missed their time of visitation. The Lord in his mercy, sent us back again and again, always with the fresh hope that a heart would be opened and a mind uplifted. And often, we carried the day, made our goals, and brought victory to our teams. More importantly though, we brought victory to the communities we fundraised, leaving a significant reservoir of indemnity conditions which accumulated and multiplied over time, bringing us to this moment. No energy we invested has ever dissipated or been lost: our tears, sweat, and blood, the countless prayers we uttered, even the pennies we earned, all remain as our providential foundation for God's work of healing this country and the world.

This moment. Now is the time to claim these conditions in our prayer as our country descends once again into a tragic, self-destructive, political and social frenzy. Nothing has changed since we were called at Watergate: we remain a sacramental presence, God's promise to our dark and troubled land. Chosen, like St. Stephen, we must witness to the redemptive power of forgiveness, love, and unity, embodying the vision of True Parents in ourselves, our families, and our communities. We need not eschew our various and differing political convictions, we need only to carry them lightly relative to our love and compassion. More than our heads, God needs our hearts.

And never forget, "Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.