

## *Caveat Emptor*

(Let the buyer beware)

The following comments on *The Essence of Christian Mysticism* by Bernadette Roberts are not meant to be exhaustive or authoritative but rather thought provoking and edifying. While I do consider myself to be an expert on the thought of Bernadette Roberts (hereafter B.), she would probably disagree with much of what I am about to write. These are the ruminations of one man who has studied her extensively, but they are in no way official nor should they be confused with her thoughts. While I regard many of the ideas she presents in this series of lectures to be the pinnacle of human thought on the most sublime and important of all topics, God, my writing will probably be slightly irreverent, flippant, funny, and challenging to the *status quo* because such is my personality and the subtext that underlies everything B. said is that personality is different from person. Just as B. had a larger-than-life personality while transcending the experience of being an individual person, my ardent hope is that this person, at a level much deeper than personality, is similarly being transformed into Christ.

These comments are meant to explain, elucidate, and explore what she says in her video series *The Essence of Christian Mysticism*. It should ideally be read in conjunction with watching the videos, pausing at the indicated times. My hope is that it can also stand alone, but I don't recommend avoiding the videos. There are over six hours of video and it is pretty heady stuff, full of theology and philosophy, but if you are at all interested in spiritual Truth and how Christianity may have gotten a little off track, I can honestly think of no better use of your time.

The talks were given over the course of a weekend in 2010 at the Church of Conscious Harmony in Austin, Texas. There were seven of them:

1. Introduction
2. Trinity
3. The Mystery of Christ
4. Christ (continued)

5. Christ Still With Us (Eucharist)
6. Faith
7. Questions and Discussion

She gave these talks after five years of researching and writing her final masterpiece called The Real Christ. It is a great companion to, and much more than an introduction to, this masterpiece.

My goal in writing this is not to convince anyone of anything except that the writer of Ecclesiastes was wrong when he said there is nothing new under the sun. Probably like you, I have read and listened to many spiritual teachers. What I have found in B. is so radically fresh and new that I thought you might want to know a little bit about her and her revolutionary new ideas. Yet, as she always said at the end of her retreats, feel free to “take it or leave it.” A final warning, if you are into defending dogma, believe it’s your way or the highway, or are threatened by new theological ideas, read no further.

### **Introduction:**

2:00- The “circle tour” is already in video format available on Youtube under the title “A Passage Through Self”. In it, B. explains the entire spiritual life from beginning to end based on her own experience from a rather Discalced Carmelite perspective.

2:18- She is motivated by a desire to get this talk on video before she dies.

3:15- Her retreats were a “free-for-all” also because she lacked the self-consciousness (and hence, self-control) to stay on track and therefore found herself talking about whatever neural pathways her brain had formed in thinking about these things. You will see many examples of this in the lectures to come.

5:00- She was speaking primarily to “fallen-away” Catholics who sought a deeper spiritual life in the East because they were not getting spiritually nourished by Christianity.

5:48- These are the first of many statements she makes that are bound to raise considerable theological dander. “Christianity is on its way out.” “It has become a Jesus-cult.” Setting aside the confrontational and hyperbolic term “Jesus-cult”

for the moment, statistics do bear out that, at least in the West, Christianity is on the decline like never before.

6:20- Perhaps you have yet to be convinced that Christianity is the most mystical of all religions. She will be trying to demonstrate this. She says that there is no such thing as Christian mysticism because Christianity IS mysticism. New idea number one.

7:20- The second “hand out” called “Unique Characteristics of Christian Mysticism” she skips over here and doesn’t give it much attention later in these talks. I will share those twelve unique characteristics, even though she doesn’t, at the appropriate time.

7:35- You cannot know Christ until you know the Trinity. New idea number two. She will explain how this is so and how it is an experiential knowledge later.

8:02- Faith has nothing to do with belief. New idea number three.

8:20- After saying there were four main ideas, she only listed three. I think the one she forgot to mention was probably the Eucharist.

8:40- God is Infinite Existence, not a person. New idea number four? I don’t think one could possibly overestimate the extent to which people have “hang-ups” on the word God. Perhaps we would do well to follow the Jewish example of not writing or uttering the unnamable.

10:00- “I don’t believe (either) in the God that you don’t believe in.” We could probably all say that to each other because it is an affirmation of growth in spiritual maturity of the person who says, “I don’t believe in God”.

10:09- It’s impossible to be an atheist. New idea number five. Unfortunately, she doesn’t really explain this statement. I think it is different than the idea that there are no atheists on a sinking ship. The fact that the ship is sinking is a practical consideration. She is saying it is theoretically impossible. Obviously, it is possible to not believe that God is a paternalistic person. Is it possible to not believe in Infinite Existence?

10:35- Henotheism

11:30- Your true existence is God. New idea number six.

13:00- She is not interested in anyone's spirituality because, by definition, spirituality is personal and she is interested in what mysticism is beyond its experience by any person.

14:25- The Essence is what makes it go for all of them and it is the same.

16:49- According to HER definition of religion, it is not man made. New idea number seven. It starts with the free revelation of God to a human and then how that revelation is understood, if it is authentic, becomes the basis for an authentic religion.

17:35- Revelation is that which, by definition, man cannot arrive at by himself.

18:14- God is beyond religion because God is beyond all Its revelations.

19:00- I think it's important to remember that the two sides of mysticism and religion are ONE. There is one coin.

19:13- She misspoke here. She said God is that which is revealed, while I think she meant to say God is that which reveals.

20:10- It's interesting (at least to me) to ponder the relationship between that which is objective and that which is universal. She is saying there is a necessary correlation between the two. Subjective/particular is what you get once you have consciousness. To become objective, one must become a universal. To become a universal is to become objective.

21:08- Religion is Revelation and the reception of that revelation. These can never be separated. You cannot have mysticism without revelation and you cannot have revelation without mysticism. Religion is a unified inseparable union of God and Man. New idea number seven?

21:40- Religion without mystical experience is not authentic. It is just a "bunch of beliefs." Is it possible then to be religious without spiritual experience? Or, is one simply relying instead on one's own beliefs in the absence of experience?

23:40- Mystical Theology is theology done in a different way. It is done in the heart and not the head. It is done on one's knees.

24:20- Any authentic revelation of God cannot contradict any other authentic revelation of God. One feels the need to incorporate the various (three main ones) revelations and keep going until transformation/understanding is complete.

24:25- What she found missing in other revelations is Christ (not Jesus) who reveals the Trinity. She didn't want to mention that here because she didn't want to get ahead of herself.

25:00- If you are still a little unclear about what she means by the word "revelation" you're in luck. Here she unpacks/explains that term sufficiently well.

25:15- This is a significant difference between private revelations and authentic revelation. Not that private revelations aren't sometimes authentic, yet we could say that to the extent that the private revelation may be doubted, it is of dubious authenticity. Neither could we say that just because a person lacks the mental faculty making doubt possible that therefore their revelation is authentic. Anything in the head can be doubted. Authentic revelation is not in the head.

27:40- "Defective kids" is not a politically correct term. She speaks elsewhere of her own niece with Down's Syndrome and what a beautiful example of the love of God she was.

28:28- She invited this young man into her apartment on Santa Monica Ave. because she refused to be a guru.

29:30- God doesn't talk. God doesn't say anything at all. New idea number 8?

30:00- These are all human words. They are not the words of God, but the attempt of a human to interpret an experience.

31:24- Here she comes down pretty hard on what most Catholics refer to with the word revelation. She wants to distinguish the personal from the universal, the intellectual from the non-intellectual.

33:55- She is describing the attitude of someone completely smitten by God. God so captured her soul from an early age that she wanted nothing other than to give herself completely to that mystery that loved her first.

35:40- The revelation comes first and indicates the goal to be realized. New idea number 9? How many of us have a spiritual goal to be realized? The same

number that has received an authentic revelation. She was flooded with them from an early age.

36:30- She begins a scathing indictment of Western Christianity and its need to set the mystics apart as special rather than as a phenomena inseparable from religious practice.

38:15- While liking Ramakrishna for getting a lot of things right, she states rather matter-of-factly about him saying all religions are the same, “he got it wrong.” (She appreciated how much he loved God.)

39:40- Different religions are NOT just different conceptual paradigms because they each have their origin in God and not in man.

41:50- I think she has done a pretty good job of explaining with this visual aid of straws in a glass of water what the vast majority of people think about the relationship between mysticism and religion. Then she says it’s wrong.

44:00 There is a branch of theology in the Catholic Church called fundamental theology which deals with these issues of revelation and universal truth. I think she is making an important contribution here. The reason why there is not common pool of mysticism is that mystical experience is the result of a specific revelation. The Buddhist will **not** dip into a common pool and find what the Hindu found. The Christian will **not** dip into a common pool and find what the Jewish person found. The revelation determines the mysticism, not the other way around.

44:52- Here she basically skips over completely one of the hand-outs called “Unique Characteristics of Christian Mysticism”. She says she will go over it later but actually never does. So here it is: (You’re welcome. Note: In her weekend retreats she would have spent a few hours going over this list of unique characteristics. I will refrain from giving my own commentary since this project is not to recreate her weekend retreat. It is simply to explain the video.)

#### **1. Trinity – The Ultimate Christian Realization and Goal to be Realized.**

Intimate nature of the Godhead – God as he is in himself and no longer as he is in ourself. **God’s three ways of Being or three dimensions** – can only be revealed against a monotheistic background, not an Eastern background. Trinity is not central to other religions.

2. **Christ – Our Goal Is Ontological Transformation Into Christ In The Trinity.**

Christ is one of the Trinity and the sole incarnation of God. That God COULD become incarnate tells us something about God hitherto unknown. On his divine side Christ revealed the trinitarian nature of God, and on his human side Christ revealed the true nature of man. (Greek mythology is just the opposite. Also, avatars or incarnations in other religions did not reveal the Trinity).

*The revelation is not what he did or said, but who he was. Christ is the revelation apart from any experience. CHRISTIANITY GOES BEYOND EXPERIENCE.*

3. **Faith and Grace** – Our unique way of traveling – supernatural or God’s doing – not a do-it-yourself religion. Not a natural religion, but supernatural = goes contrary to nature. If we realize our own deepest nature we realize we are nothing (hole in the circle).

a). Faith = God’s presence in us.

b). Grace = This presence transforming us – God’s activity in us.

“Sacramental Life” is the recapitulation of Christ’s life in us.

c). Faith and grace do not depend upon experience; they are below consciousness, non-experiential – which is why faith is required.

4. **Love of God** – Hallmark and SOLE technique. Defines our relationship to God. Love resides in the will, not in emotion, sentiments or feelings. Love is the means and the end. (To see God is to Love God – can’t help it!)

5. **Absence of Techniques** – Love cannot be made into a technique.

1. Personal teacher is the immanent Holy Spirit.

2. Universal teacher – universal Church, whose purpose is to guard the transmission of the revelation AND ENSURE THAT IT IS OPEN TO EVERYONE. NOT ESOTERIC OR OPEN TO A PRIVILEGED FEW. Because truth is objective, it is open to everyone, while subjective truth is neither universal nor open to everyone. Practice is different than technique.

6. **Objective Focus On God** – Focus is never on the subjective self; we must go out of self to be in God. God is not self, is beyond or transcends self. Revelation is objective, a universal Truth because it is not our subjective self. Thus, God is objective (transcendent) and non-subjective. “God is closer to us than we are to

ourselves". (God is the primary object of consciousness – not a sensory or intellectual object, of course).

**7. Requires Highest Moral Standards** – This keeps more people back than anything else. Self-discipline is imperative. Asceticism tries the will – tests the waters – and is everyone's beginning. (Reformation of life is our doing, whereas transformation is God's doing.) The Eucharist saves us from self-analysis, self-absorption, from questioning our oneness with God.

**8. Positive Value Of Suffering** – Christ's example. Sole purpose of suffering is transformation – necessary for ontological change. Because we are not God, there is no other way.

**9. Self Is A Unique Individual Created By God** – Created one-on-One, unique and like to other (just as God is). Self is the essence of humanity and medium of revelation – not an illusion, a mental error, or something bad to be gotten rid of. We go through self to God, this is our human journey.

**10. Eternal Oneness Of Body And Soul** – Two manifestations of one reality – one "person". Resurrection and the Eucharist elevate the body to eternal status. No "out of body" reality, or pure spirit; rather, matter itself is deified, made as eternal and immortal as the soul. Matter, body, flesh is not bad or evil (a gnostic idea).

**11. Mystical Theology Does Not Separate Experience And Knowing** or the mystical from the theological. The sole value of experience is what we learn from it, thus authentic mysticism is revelation, knowing.

**12. Means Of Transmission:** 1). Continuous revelation. 2). Sacraments or grace. Not transmitted by teachers, theologies or even scriptures.

**Note:** Our journey recapitulates the whole history of God's revelations to man. We need to integrate these different revelations: 1. God in nature 2. God in ourselves 3. God beyond nature and self 4. Oneness of Transcendent and Immanent 5. Economic Trinity or God and 6. Immanent Trinity or Godhead

O.K. Back to our regularly scheduled programming...

45:34- When she says the **first** revelation of God to Man is in nature, she is referring to the note above regarding the history of God's revelations. According to B., there seems to be an order, a progression in the spiritual life that mirrors the progression of humanity's reception of these three following revelations.

47:30- When she says she used to be able to "sink into" this presence of God in nature she is referring to a few experiences she recounts in her autobiography called Contemplative. One of them was when she was five or six lying on her father's new boat traveling from Santa Monica to Catalina Island in Southern California. She describes the blissful peace she felt floating like a cork on the vast sea and how she learned that all of nature exists in this blissful state in union with the Logos. All of nature, that is, except for Man who is "bogged down" with self-consciousness.

She states that all of nature is "happy". This is probably because it is not burdened with self-consciousness and because the Transcendent knows the Logos throughout creation while the Logos knows the Transcendent, both with the Holy Spirit. To say nature doesn't suffer is probably new idea number 9. It's not that compassion towards hurt animals is foolish, it's recognizing that all of creation knows its Creator on some level that is deeper than physical pain. Real suffering is spiritual, not physical, and animals are exempt from this.

49:18- She takes for granted that we are "all familiar" with God within. I think she gives us all a little too much spiritual credit here. How many of us have contact with the center of our being?

52:00- Each one is the fullness of God because God cannot be divided.

52:30- There is no revelation of God to man that falls outside one of these three. People who don't understand the Trinity would disagree. New idea number ten?

53:05- She meant to say there is no self IN GOD.

54:00- Interesting to note that she is getting ANSWERS from God to all her profound questions about God.

54:44- She presents a functional/practical definition of God. This is how God works.

56:07- She calls Stoicism with its goal of becoming one with the Logos in nature a “true” religion centuries before Jesus.

56:55- The goal is always to be one with that aspect or function of God.

58:05- In the case of the Transcendent, the goal is to be one with the will of God.

59:59- She is careful to correct herself reminding the listener that she is only an expert on her own experience and has nothing to say about other people’s spiritual experience.

1:00:54- Here she explains briefly the note at the end of the page that she skipped over.

1:03:27- God *ad extra* (as known to Man) is really no different than God *ad intra* (in and of Itself). New idea number ten. God is knowable. Not by the mind, mind you, but by the body. New idea number eleven.

1:04:19- God *ad extra* is the Logos. She also calls it the Cosmic Christ.

1:05:35- She writes about being “knocked out” by the Glory of the Transcendent in her autobiography.

1:06:26- There is no truth to the notion that God is a Father and Son. Another statement made to raise some theological dander.

1:06:56- Meister Eckhart’s breakthrough was a mess because he didn’t “turn around” and see the Trinity from the inside. New idea number twelve.

### **Trinity:**

1:44- If you start with one and really “go with it” you are going to “get them all” because each reveals the other.

2:00- God reveals Itself to **every** human being. She says nobody gets to heaven and explains “I didn’t know.” New idea number thirteen.

2:38- She doesn’t want to use the word God when talking about what is revealed to every human person because of people’s big hang-ups over that word. She’s taking mysticism down off the top shelf, says we should throw the word out,

because it is ordinary, not extraordinary. The reason why it's important for people to have this pointed out to them is that you catch more flies with honey.

4:18- Even devout atheists who are really into nature must be contemplatives. You don't have to believe in God to contemplate God.

4:37- Our deepest experience of God is a belly laugh. The subject matter of something funny might not be "godly" but the experience is. New idea number fourteen.

5:06- God is laughter.

7:20- Mysticism is for everyday and not separate from ordinary life. Ordinary life is infused with the extraordinary.

8:16- To really contemplate God you've got to get rid of the intellect because that is all just self and there is no self in God.

8:42- If you really saw God in nature, you would not see nature anymore. Completely baffling new idea number fifteen.

9:25- God in nature was always "huge" for her. Once you know God is in nature then you can see It there all the time and you are a contemplative.

10:46- I suspect most people would be content with any one of the three main revelations. This is one thing that made B. unique. She would not rest, could not be content, until she had come upon the fullness of the Truth, which fullness she calls Christ.

11:20- Christ answers the question, "What am I to God?" New idea number sixteen.

11:53- She knew God like the back of her hand at age fifteen (She's not lying.) When she posed important questions to God, she always got answers. So, at age 15, she asked God, "Do I have any eternal oneness with you?" The answer she got was Christ. It was a definitive moment in her life, changing her life direction completely.

12:30- She meant to say if nature ISN'T saved, then I don't want to be saved.

16:16- Perhaps the reason why many of us do not have a sense of God's being is because we don't have a sense of our own being, what we are at the deepest level.

17:09- She hammers this point home for the third time here, that God is your true being but that does not mean that you are God's being, because she is an adamant monotheist and was surrounded by lovely people who had turned to Hinduism, many forms of which claim (according to her) that all is God. Conversely, she claims that God is all EXCEPT the self. It is very striking.

20:00- The Christian revelation had nothing to do with God. New idea number seventeen.

20:15- The line that divides the uncreated from the created is ALSO the line that unites them. New idea number eighteen. Anyone want to talk about non-duality?

20:45- Christ is the eternal union of the created and the uncreated. This is true not just of man, but of all of creation, but, because man is a microcosm of the macrocosm, it is true of man as well.

22:00- Christ is not a person or being. It is the oneness that we must be transformed into. New idea number 19.

24:04- Heaven is right here with us just in a different dimension. Unfortunately, she doesn't do a great job explaining different dimensions.

25:25- Our life is a preparation to be able to "bear the vision" so that we are not "knocked out" and can behold the vision and Glory of God.

25:46- The reason why the kenosis, or transition from one dimension of existence to another, was necessary is because the two dimensions of existence, while being a Oneness, are **also** mutually exclusive. It's not rational.

26:15- God has to keep a distance in order to keep creation in existence. The relationship is analogous to two magnets drawn toward each other but never touching. God is one magnet and humanity and all of creation is the other. If the two did not maintain their separation, creation would be "obliterated" by the Divine. Hence, God's apparent distance is an act of mercy.

34:10- This is why she doesn't like emanationist theologies. She doesn't believe in begetting but rather, since they all share the same one essence, they are not separate from each other. They are the different ways God acts. They are all equally eternal and there is no hierarchy in the Trinity.

34:44- Another provocative statement, namely that the terms Father and Son have nothing to do with the Trinity.

35:40- She misspoke again here. She meant to say God is more than just what God does.

37:00- While Christianity has a terrible problem with Christ, the Trinity emerged practically effortlessly. It took a few hundred years to formulate it dogmatically but it was already there with Philo of Alexandria, a Jewish contemporary of Jesus.

37:47- The two sides of the yellow paper on the Trinity are God *ad Intra* or God-in-and-of-Itself, and God *ad Extra* or God-as-known-to-man. She starts here with God *ad Intra*.

38:00- Here are the distinctions she makes between the three "persons" of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Formless, Eternal Form, and In-Forming, Divine Will or Governor, Wisdom or Divine Knowing, and Power, and Unmoved, The Moved, and the Mover.

She begins her next (somewhat hilariously) talk with "now that we have the Trinity down..." If the distinctions within the Trinity are still a little fuzzy for you, you are in luck. She will use similar terms thereby making it possible for you to compare the differences between the terms as you begin to understand more fully the distinctions she is trying to make.

40:12- *Prosopa* is the plural of *Prosopon* which meant face and was a term unacceptable to the East but used anyway because it was biblical.

40:30- Here she takes a little jab at calling God three persons. The first councils never used the term person (which term she is against for its anthropomorphic connotations). Instead, they used the term *Prosopon* (which, ironically, is also somewhat anthropomorphic).

41:30- *Logos* is a Greek term and, for the Greeks, it meant mind or knowing (among other things) and we derive our word logic from it. It did NOT mean word, as it did for the Latins.

42:38- Here she adds two more definitions for the Transcendent: the Glory of God and the Ground of all Being.

43:09- Did Paul call Christ the “form of God” in Philipians?

44:07- The Trinity is not three individual things because they are not individuals. I think this is very important to keep in mind as we continue our exploration.

45:50- Christ is not an individual because the Trinity is not three individuals.

47:13- Here she kind of switches around what most people think about (if they are thinking at all) when they make the sign of the cross. Whereas most people say the son second as they touch their belly, she is saying that one could refer to the interior presence deep within as the Holy Spirit as one touches one’s center. Then, rather than saying Holy Spirit as one touches one’s shoulders, one could think of the Logos (or “son”) as being throughout all of creation including the distance between one’s shoulders. So, if one makes the sign of the cross in the same way, one would say instead, “In the name of the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Logos.” New idea number 20.

50:30- Because she didn’t pay much attention in school and got mediocre grades, (except in religion class) she pronounces the word diff-er-ence as diff-ernce. Her hand-outs and books were full of typographical errors. (At least she and I have that in common!)

51:37- Our spiritual journey is to move from God-in-ourselves to God-in-Itself (even though God has no self).

52:55- She misspoke again here. It was not Peter who said we will share in the Divine knowing but Paul. She encouraged people to correct her on “all that biblical business” because she didn’t look “to some book” for God. She didn’t try to explain the bible because that was not in her ken. She only explained her personal experience.

53:50- Again, she meant Paul, not Peter.

54:28- She is celebrating our participation, our partaking in the Divine without ever becoming Divine. She laments that more priests don't say these words at the consecration in full voice but rather whisper them. She probably would have liked them to be shouted.

55:15- She claims, somewhat presumptuously, that everybody knows their oneness with God. The real challenge is to discover the Trinity which thereby makes an understanding of Christ possible.

58:00- It's interesting that, after claiming that God is not a person, she insists that God must be personal because It cares enough to reveal itself. I am not positive what she means when she says God is beyond the distinction between personal and impersonal. She could mean that self is responsible for this distinction and, once "known" (not with the intellect) beyond self, God is seen to be beyond this distinction.

Nevertheless, I think it's worth making sure we have the distinctions that she just rushed through clearly in mind.

1. = Transcendent (a term she doesn't like) 2. = Logos 3. = Holy Spirit

1. Above all, 2. Throughout all, 3. In all, 1. Will that governs all, 2. Omnipresent, 3. Omnipotent, 1. Beyond Creation, 2. One with Creation, 3. Indwelling in man, 1. Object of love, 2. Subject of love, 3. Flame of love, 1. Glory of the Godhead, 2. The Revealed, 3. The Revealer, 1. Super-personal, 2. Relatively Impersonal, 3. Personal to us (because we are persons)

1:02:05- Here she is explaining a little about what she means when she says, "If you really see God in nature, you're not going to see nature anymore!"

At this point my DVD is too scratched up and won't play. Missing are the last twenty minutes of talk 2 on The Trinity. If anyone else would like to fill in this gap, we could all benefit.

**Disk 2, talk #3 The Mystery of Christ and talk #4 The Mystery Continued**

:40- People today can't grasp the real Christ because it had been made so complicated and a correct understanding, which is utterly simple, is gone from Christianity. B.'s ideas might not appear simple. That is because we have gotten so far off track. New idea number twenty-one.

1:46- Christ = God creating a human nature (not a person) for itself.

1:55- Christ is Man's oneness with God because we all have the same human nature.

2:30- Christ preceded Jesus. Here she is using the word Christ as a title meaning "anointed." She's using it as a synonym for the union of God with humanity. Jesus revealed the oneness that had already been established. New idea number twenty-two.

3:09- Most people will be fighting the urge to jump up out of their chairs and shout, "Heretic!" when they hear her say that Jesus never knew Christ. Hold on a minute (or an hour) and let her explain. What she means is that Christ is what Jesus was transformed into at the Resurrection and, until then, he still had "a ways to go" in his own transformation. His transformation was not over until he declared, "It is finished."

4:00- Jesus failed in his attempts to realize the purported goals of the Jewish messiah.

5:10- Jesus was less concerned with family cohesion than he was with every person realizing the kingdom of God.

10:00- The belief of Paul and Jesus and the entire ancient world regarding conception, which effected early theologies of sin and atonement, we now know to be false.

11:30- God provided the sperm to make Jesus who did not preexist the Incarnation. Where did the sperm come from? Some other planet? Some other dimension? I don't think so. The chromosome necessary for conception probably came directly from the body of Mary.

14:07- "We are going to get a whole different view of Christianity if we get it right." Jesus didn't save anyone from any inherited sin. Jesus "saved" us from

ourselves by showing the extent to which we must transcend ourselves, that is completely.

14:45- Somewhat ironically, that which makes us different is that which we all share, the same free will. The extent to which we are truly free or determined is a separate issue. Still, she holds out that there is some part of us that is truly free, although perhaps probably pretty small, and which bestows upon us personal responsibility for becoming the persons we do.

18:30- She says elsewhere that you will never understand Christ if you cannot distinguish between what you are and who you are. Christ is not who anyone is because Christ is not a who. Even who Jesus was, was different than what he was. Once who he was died, only Christ remained.

19:30- How free will is used creates the person. By their fruit shall ye know them. (Also the wisdom of Dumbledore.)

19:50- Christ is not a union of persons, but rather a oneness of natures, human and divine.

20:47- This is why Christ is a mystery and a “problem”. It is the oneness of two unknown essences.

21:27- She meant to say, “by that **they** meant” and not, “by that I meant”.

22:43- by “more than a union” she means oneness.

24:24- the hypostatic union is **in** the essence of God. What she means by that preposition she doesn’t really explain, and neither can I.

24:55- Christ is the oneness of the Logos with human nature and is therefore **in** the Trinity (because of this oneness with the Logos) but is not one **of** the Trinity.

25:15- When she asked if the people listening saw how Christ was **in** God, she probably just saw a bunch of blank stares. It’s a shame no one had the courage to say, “No, what the hell do you mean?” Maybe they were confused because she was not referring to Jesus but to a oneness.

27:05- Grace is God, not some favor.

28:10- A life filled with Grace is all that is necessary to lead a perfect life. This is her standing up for the common, ordinary, beautifulness of the common, ordinary life. You don't have to be a great saint or mystic to be pleasing to God.

28:48- Once you are "confirmed in Grace" you are no longer free to sin. You are less free in that sense, but you are radically more free because you are no longer a slave to sin.

30:20- And...in rushes technical support to reaffix the battery pack taped to the back of her chair. The sound of it falling probably woke a few people up from their drowsiness. I find the unprofessionalism of the whole thing beautifully quaint and funny. She admits to not being a good speaker, pronounces words like literature as literture, yet for all its "jankiness", the content still floors me.

31:54- When she says the hypostatic union is nowhere in man, I think she also means it has nothing to do with the essence of man which is consciousness. It is beyond consciousness and anything that consciousness can point to.

32:30- Her stream of consciousness way of speaking (because there was no self to control) leads her to say, as if for the first time, yet once again, that Mary was necessary for the Incarnation.

33:18- The Incarnation reveals many things that, so far, we have missed completely. New idea number 23.

33:51- Jesus, the person, was not Christ because Christ is not a person. Further, It is more than just a title. He was used as an instrument to reveal Christ.

34:15- Because he was the archetype (or model) for all of humanity, Jesus became Christ just as each of us will eventually, because Christ will be all in all.

34:50- Of course she has no idea what Mary told Jesus as soon as she could. She was not there. She is extrapolating from her personal experience of learning that God was her true parent. In this sense she identifies with Jesus and figures he must have had the same experience.

36:17- "The advantage of knowing **that**" that God was his father, led him away from an individualistic consciousness toward a relational consciousness of us/we/the Father and I as one.

36:38- Some people say Jesus went to India to seek enlightenment during the “hidden years.” She is saying those accounts are spurious and dubious in the extreme.

36:56- She calls his thirty “hidden years” one of the most beautiful and marvelous aspects of his life. Here, once again, she is sticking up for the common everydayness of union with God.

37:00- Jesus didn’t work miracles. New (possibly heretical) idea number 24? God worked the miracles on his behalf to draw attention to him and what he had to say. Recall him asking, “Who touched me?”

37:45- Oneness with God is your daily life, not some great accomplishment. Mysticism, the realization of one’s oneness with God is for everybody, not a select few.

37:52- purse, kids, cell phone, daily life!

38:14- The call might be from some credit card company after her. How many gurus do you know fending off credit card companies? So funny.

38:54- One of the greatest mystics of all time asking her friends to throw her purse out the door...

39:51- John the Baptist “outed” Jesus because he “reconized” (not recognized) him.

40:02- How easily we forget that, “This is family stuff!”

40:25- Perhaps it was neither Jesus nor John who heard the words, “This is my beloved son” but the writer of the fourth gospel.

40:55- Jesus went off to think about how this would work, him being known to other people as someone who was one with God.

42:05- She misspoke here due to her lack of familiarity with the scriptures. Jesus did not say, “Before Abraham I was” but rather “Before Abraham was, I am”. The idea, however, is basically the same. The Jewish belief was that the Messiah preexisted his coming into the world and Jesus believed he was the Messiah.

43:25- One must be in the unitive state to understand what she calls “the fine line” experientially. We who are not in the unitive state (the abiding sense of

one's oneness with God) can still understand something of what she is talking about here.

44:30- Your experience of existence is God's existence. Your life is God's life. That your life is yours is a misunderstanding. It's all God's. New idea number twenty-five.

46:08- The only object of consciousness is itself because it is constantly reflexive either on a subconscious level or a conscious level. It's this reflexive mechanism that creates both subject and object at the same time. It has nothing to do with sensory perception.

46:40- Practically speaking, when consciousness has outlived its usefulness and dies, it feels (to the body not consciousness) like one is being abandoned by God because it was consciousness that knew God and now that experience ends. "Why have you abandoned me?" The indwelling Spirit left when the experience of there being an inside left.

47:10- Again, she was not there and can't prove what Jesus was afraid of and what he was not afraid of. She is extrapolating from her personal experience because she so identified with the man.

47:45- Jesus sweat out (with blood?) the fine line between existence and non-existence because he so wanted to do the will of the Father and not be a "flunky" or someone who failed to fulfil the mission of the messiah.

48:26- Jesus in the garden "voluntarily accepted" non-existence while the rest of us continue to hope to eat our pie in the sky. There are very few real followers. Perhaps Jesus knew that what he was is eternal and therefore predicted the resurrection. Perhaps he thought his consciousness would perdure.

49:12- How many of us will "go with" being created to cease to exist because it is the will of God? Hope is abandoned in the face of faith and love.

50:00- She never claimed to have perfect love of God but perfect trust in God she did embody. Ultimately, of course, they are inseparable.

51:21- I love her hillbilly nomenclature. How many people think of Jesus "hollering" from the cross?

51:53- The Resurrection was in no way similar to what happened to Lazarus which was revivification.

51:00- Jesus was surprised by the resurrection, not because he didn't know it would happen, but because of what was revealed. New idea number twenty-six.

51:15- The resurrection is equally a revelation of the Incarnation. New idea number 27. Human nature in oneness with the Logos looks the same after consciousness has ended as it did before consciousness emerged. The resurrection is the revelation of after consciousness. The incarnation was that oneness before consciousness.

52:11- Does the idea that how it went for him is how it will go for every one of us inspire fear, hope, love, or what? If she's right, you might want to start thinking about it.

52:40- God's human nature did not belong to Jesus. Of course, God had no need to create a human nature perfectly belonging to It. It was pure mercy for humanity to teach us who and what we are. New idea number twenty-eight. He was its instrument.

53:06- The "circle tour" is how she refers to her passage through a series of concentric circles which she calls "The passage through self" on YouTube. Consciousness is the veil we must pass through between being the Alpha and the Omega.

53:28- Here she mocks and scorns the "puny" view that some ego died on the cross. She claims that Jesus never had an ego to begin with. That did not make him less human, but more human. There is obviously a tremendous difference in understanding the crucifixion between someone who has lived for decades without an ego, and someone who hasn't.

54:10- Of course, Christ being a oneness, cannot die. But Jesus' experience of that oneness, his experience of Christ, did die when he stopped being an experiencer, or someone separate from God.

54:54- If you only have the perfect oneness of the Divine nature with Human nature after the resurrection, and B. claimed to have experienced the

resurrection, it follows logically that either she was deluded, lying, or a spokesperson for the Divine nature.

55:15- Why would iconoclastic religions like Islam not allow “pitchers” B.? We all need to drink liquids, no? They didn’t like baseball? “No nothin’”? So, everything is allowed?

56:08- He was like us in all ways including no original sin. He was, she believes, born in the unitive state, and that does set him apart. I think she is being characteristically provocative when she says, “I don’t know if he ever sinned or not” because the idea of him sinning is contradictory to the idea of him being born in the unitive state.

56:30- Christianity does not believe that Jesus was God. New (and “heretical”) idea number twenty-nine. We don’t’ worship a human being just because he was in union with the Logos. We worship the Logos.

56:56- She’s not sure where to place the accent on the word anthropolatry because nobody uses that word except for people who write philosophical dictionaries.

57:10- Here she comes pretty darn close to calling Christianity paganism for its worship of a man.

57:35- The early church fathers wanted to present Christ as one being because the human mind needs something to focus on.

1:00:08- She misspoke again here when she said “there is no such thing as a particular human being.” She meant to say, “there is no such thing as a particular human nature.”

1:00:58- Persons are particular, human nature is not. Human nature does not pertain to, or belong to, any particular individual. It is always a universal.

:10- This is where she says, somewhat famously, “since we have the Trinity down”. What she means is that she has just finished exploring it in greater detail and depth than you are probably used to.

1:20- Is it ironic or appropriate that a great Jewish mystic who never heard of Jesus “got Christianity off the ground”?

1:45- In order to get “the whole shebang” one has to “really go with It”. That is to say, one must see how the Transcendent reveals the Logos and the Spirit, how the Spirit reveals the Logos and the Transcendent, and how the Logos reveals the Transcendent and the Spirit. Similarly, the Transcendent and the Logos reveal the Spirit. The Logos and the Spirit reveal the Transcendent. The Transcendent and the Spirit reveal the Logos.

3:54- The hundreds of philosophical sects seeking oneness with the Logos at the time of Jesus’ birth she calls authentic religions.

4:48- Here she again emphasizes the oneness of God with matter while never negating the “great divide” between the created and the uncreated.

5:40- “What does Christ answer?” Christ answers the question, “Am I one now and eternally with God?” with the answer, “Yes!”.

6:00- Why are you seeking eternal oneness with God? Because that has been the plan for you from the beginning.

6:33- Our eternal oneness with God is Christ. New idea #? Our eternal oneness with God is not Jesus or “some man”.

7:18- All genuine religions are the Truth. Just as Hindu’s want to incorporate Jesus into their religion with their concept of Purusha, B. wants to incorporate Hinduism’s revelation of God immanent into Christianity and say that Christianity “goes deeper” or “has the fullness”. Yet she is very careful to state here that these authentic religions based on authentic revelations of God should not be negated, but rather loved.

8:00- Here she once again is sticking up for the uniqueness of the Christian revelation.

8:30- She admires and respects the pre-Christian pagan religions of North America. To the extent that they were similar, we could probably assume that she would have had respect for most of the shamanistic traditions throughout the Americas. She says repeatedly that God in nature was “huge” (not large, but of great importance) for her.

8:55- The revelation of Christ was not meant for some Christian. Christ is not for Christians but for every human.

9:00- When she says, “He was this- God utterly Transcendent” she is not saying that Jesus was God. She was grabbing the straw that represents Judaism. She was saying he was a Jew with Jewish beliefs.

10:14- The resurrection is the revelation of the Logos because, post person, there is nothing else to be united to except matter.

10:51- This is a point that is worthy of emphasizing. Heaven is not a place, nor some planet. Neither are our resurrected bodies physical, but rather, spiritual. Either that means they exist in a dimension beyond the physical/spiritual distinction, or, it means, as impermanent, the physical dimension was never really Real in the first place.

11:22- The “simple folk” (the vast majority of us) are not able to conceive of spiritual realities, only material ones.

11:45- She seems to be hinting that a spiritually intelligent/mature mind is able to contemplate “pure spirit” while a spiritually stupid/immature mind is only able to contemplate material things. So, practice, practice, practice.

12:14- Whenever she would tell her children that she was going “home”, they all knew that she meant that she was going to the monastery of New Camoldali in Big Sur, Ca.

12:50- You cannot “pigeonhole” Christ?

13:42- If you have a guru, even me, you are spiritually retarded. You must listen first and foremost to the only teacher there is, the Holy Spirit. She refused to be anyone’s guru.

14:24- Once again, for the third time, she lambasts spiritual “rules and regulations”. You have to be free. (That’s why I left the monastery after over five years.)

15:25- She puts in a plug here for *fuga mundi*, or flight from the world (with a smile on her face) because her body/mind/soul/heart was constantly telling her to “get away from it all”.

15:38- "Who (what person) did Jesus follow? Nobody." Yet, everybody is expected to follow him? If he is our model, it makes no sense. Just as he did, we follow the Holy Spirit.

16:55- She couldn't imagine putting Christ first because she put God first and then came upon Christ. First God, then Christ is revealed.

17:15- You are not to be transformed into some other person because Christ is not a person. You are to be transformed into Christ, the eternal (beyond space and time) oneness (beyond a mere union) of God's eternal essence and the mysterious essence of human nature.

17:40- Even though she didn't know what she was being transformed into (see 1 Jn. 3:2), she didn't care because she just "stuck" with God. Perfect faith.

18:08- You have to get beyond your desire to "pinpoint" Christ in order to be open to the Trinity, which will keep you "busy for the rest of your life."

18:42- While it may seem that the Holy Spirit is doing all the transforming, the Ground of Being and the Logos are "going right along with it" effecting your transformation because the Three can never be separated.

18:58- The essence of Christian mysticism is knowing the Trinity and being "attuned" to it to see how it is manifesting in our lives.

19:35- "Christ is not presented correctly" in India, or anywhere else. It is presented as a particular thing, instead of a universal oneness.

19:59- That "Christ and Krishna are premised on two totally different understandings" means that no one is transformed into Krishna, while all are transformed into Christ.

20:20- She doesn't trust any book to tell her who is enlightened and who isn't. She can spot them from a mile away.

21:18- Finally, after twenty minutes of wrapping up the trinity/spiritual BIG talk (as opposed to spiritual small talk), she gets around to beginning her discussion of the Eucharist.

1:04:00- She's advocating for a more mysterious understanding of Christ. Simply pointing to the man Jesus and saying he is Christ lets you off the hook. You no longer understand that you are mysteriously being transformed into Christ through the mysteries of the Church which, in the West, are called sacraments.

1:05:00- She says the Eastern Orthodox "have it right" by administering all three mysteries of initiation shortly after birth. She chose to worship in an Eastern Rite of the Catholic Church for the last years of her life. She left the Western Latin-rite Church.

1:06:30- There are 22 rites in the Catholic Church. According to the documents of the Second Vatican Council, they are all equally worthy of dignity and respect. The Latin rite is simply by far the most popular.

1:07:52- We can't incorporate children early enough into the Church because they need that sacramental grace from day one.

1:08:00- The mystery of reconciliation is more than a mere forgiveness of sins. It is a new beginning, a fresh start, forget who you were and become someone different.

1:08:50- Christianity doesn't do a good job on marriage because the sanctity of the union is not sufficiently emphasized. She speaks elsewhere of talking with her siblings and they all agreeing that their parents ruined marriage for them because the model and example they grew up with was so beautiful and holy that they had the expectation that their marriages would be similar. Her parents put God first and each other second, while B.'s marriage, and that of her siblings, was markedly different. Perhaps they entered into their marriages a little naïve.

1:09:24- We don't need Jesus to forgive us when God is not surprised by our sins. We need to learn to forgive one another, in mind, word, and deed.

1:13:07- Her parents understood the importance of putting first things first.

1:17:15- The function of the priest is to offer sacrifice. We participate in the universal priesthood of Christ to the extent that we offer sacrifice. Again, she is saying that Jesus was not sacrificed so that we wouldn't have to. He is the model of how we should sacrifice ourselves too.

1:25:00- Here she somewhat unjustifiably bashes centering prayer because she understands it as looking inwards at yourself. She was gifted by God from an early age to be able to see God within easily while most of us aren't so lucky.

1:26:15- There is no room for "you" in your spiritual life. It is all God's doing.

1:26:23- When some contemplatives go to their rooms to pray, sometimes they don't. She never left the presence of God in the Eucharist during her two hours of daily prayer.

1:29:20- She doesn't like the word "advanced" when it comes to describing contemplatives because the connotation is that some people are better than others. She went beyond "advanced" but never considered herself better than anyone else.

1:34:00- This is a question she was doubtlessly asked dozens of times, "Can I be saved outside the Church?" The answer she gives is basically, "Yes" because no one can say where God is not. Theologians like Karl Rahner will want to call those people "anonymous Christians" to preserve the integrity of the doctrine that *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (or outside the Church there is no salvation); but a literalistic interpretation of that doctrine has been so rejected by Rome that priests have been excommunicated for adhering to it too strictly. It all depends on how you define "church".

1:34:40- We **do** know where God is- in the mysteries (a.k.a. sacraments). Not that God is limited to the mysteries but it is there we can be sure to encounter It.

1:35:30- Many people seek experiences as an affirmation of God's Grace. (A wicked and perverse generation looks for signs.) She is saying the opposite. The most sublime graces are non-experiential, like Faith. Experience, like jumping up and down or being "slain in the Spirit" are dependent on an experiencer and, in some ways, strengthen the ego rather than diminish it. There has to be nothing in it (including tears) for you.

1:37:20- St. John of the Cross (the national poet of Spain) counsels us to not get caught up in the effect because that is just self. We remain focused on the cause which is God and we pay no heed to the effect.

1:38:00- You open yourself up to deception if you rely on your own interpretations of your experiences. B. didn't have to interpret her experiences because that which she was supposed to know was contained in the experience. This is essentially what it means for something to be an authentic revelation. Experiences come and go but revelation remains in the soul, permanently changing the soul. Throw out your experiences and your interpretations of them and remain focused on the uncaused cause of them (a.k.a. God).

1:38:20- Two points for St. John of the Cross vs. St. Teresa of Avila. Not that they were fighting, but their spiritual lives were very different and B. prefers John's way of thinking.

1:39:50- God is not your valet (nor Santa Claus) waiting to please your ego. If you are in the spiritual life to feel good about yourself, discount your spiritual life completely. You have to be in it only for the greater glory of God.

1:41:00- If we reply, "Well, that's easy for you (who have been flooded with grace) to say." Here she is basically admitting that is true. Without grace first, true and selfless love of God is hardly possible.

1:41:30- Love of God is tough love. This is true not only of God's love for us (My God, why have you forsaken me? Psalm 22), but should also be true of our love for God. We do it without "sugar cubes" for the self. New idea number twenty-nine?

1:43:50- Contemplatives don't pray for themselves, but for the world. Somewhat ironically, many are made holy through their prayers that you be made holy.

1:44:40- The contemplative vocation is larger than life. It is larger than your concerns. It embraces the good of the entire species and cosmos. (What you do for the least of these, you do for me.)

### **Disk 3, Talk #5 Christ Still With Us (Eucharist)**

1:45:55- The Eucharist (and genetics and common sense) reveals that in spite of our multiplicity, we are one. We are one species.

1:49:08- The idea that your true body is being transformed into the Eucharist is a mystery vast and deep. It apparently goes all the way back to St. Augustine in the

fifth century who, when giving the Eucharist to people used to say, “Receive what you are to become.” “New” (actually ancient) idea number 30.

1:50:10- The Eucharist is different than Jesus. Jesus existed in space and time while the Eucharist does not. This is a mystical (a.k.a. non-rational) understanding of the Eucharist that might not be familiar to you. The Eucharist is not limited to what we can perceive with the senses in time and space. You could say, “Yes, but then Jesus left space and time to dwell in Heaven.” To the extent that you are thinking of Jesus “seated” in a place called Heaven, you have it wrong. To the extent you are thinking of a universal that you will be transformed into, you have it right.

1:50:30- “Seated at the right hand of the Father” was **never** meant to be taken literally. I think she knows this and was being feisty once again. “Seated” means authority and “right hand” means sharing-in-the-glory-of-because-of-proximity-to.

1:50:12- Heaven is here and now means the presence is with us in the Eucharist, not everywhere in a pantheistic sense. As we have seen, she is an advocate of the “cosmic Christ” reminding us that all of creation is one with God. The Eucharist refutes pantheism because what you can see is **not** it.

1:50:57- If we can say that Heaven is the dimension in which the Eucharist dwells, can we also say that the Eucharist exists in the dimension “where” Heaven is? (more of my silly questions... if you like questions like these, you may like the study guide I wrote to [The Real Christ](#).)

1:52:51- Everybody is seeking oneness with God (whether they know it or not) and people exiting the church building after receiving the Eucharist can confidently say, “I **am** one with God!”

1:53:56- Not even in the slightest way was she politically correct. She doesn’t care about cultural sensitivity at all.

1:54:44- Remembrance, for the Jew, has nothing to do with birthdays. It means never forget where you came from and your heritage which makes you who you are.

1:55:50- Buddhist mindfulness is, in many ways, similar to the notion of self-forgetfulness. One is focused on the external world, not the subjective one. The “purification of the memory” in Christian mysticism has more to do with focusing on **what** you are rather than **who** you are. You are no longer mindful of self.

1:56:26- The single drop of water (which symbolizes us) is consumed by the wine before and during the wines’ transformation into Christ. Our human nature is consecrated (or set apart) for the sacred purpose of self-sacrifice.

1:58:29- There is no place for self in the spiritual life because that in you which knows God is the Logos, and that in you which loves God is the Spirit. You are basically irrelevant, except for your free will which you must take responsibility for.

1:59:20- Christ **can’t** come again since Christ is already here. New idea number thirty-one.

1:59:45- “I’m one of those” (stubborn people) who refuse to enter into a prayer they don’t believe in.

2:01:15- She doesn’t like the word “church” because it sounds too industrialized (I think she meant to say institutional). She prefers to refer to the spiritual movement called Christianity. Symbolically, she prefers John to Peter. It should be remembered, however, that the only alternative to organized religion is unorganized religion (a.k.a. spirituality which is how most people self-Identify these days). She does repeatedly lambast “all these rules and regulations”.

2:02:00- This is something that I have pondered for over twenty years of studying B. Everyone wants to know our end. How will we end up? The last things- death, resurrection, ascension, glorification... where do they all end up? She is saying the answer is right here with us here and now in the Eucharist. It still boggles my addled mind.

### **Disk 3, part 2, Talk 6 on Faith:**

:58- The truth is unbelievable, not just marvelous, but literally not able to be believed because it is beyond the mind which is only capable of belief.

1:45- Belief is different from Faith. New idea number thirty-two. This is the main point of this talk. In a way she is redefining Faith based on her own extensive experience of It.

2:40- Nobody, including the authors of theological dictionaries, has it right.

3:55- Belief is our own exercise or something that we do (by assenting). Faith, however, is not our own doing.

5:00- She went beyond belief when she came to know God at a young age. She didn't need beliefs.

6:45- We should remember that while there were elements of the Christian party line that did not make sense to her, she did become a Catholic nun (mostly because of the Trinity and the Eucharist).

8:10- For as much as she likes to bash scholasticism, she is agreeing with St. Thomas Aquinas here who also taught that Faith is a gift. (Ephesians 2:8) Much of what she says is not actually new. It only appears so because Christianity has gotten so far off track. It's probably about time for a Vatican Council III. (Although it might be too late in the West.)

8:32- Faith is preconscious because it is not of the mind. It is God knowing Itself in man. This knowing is the closest thing we could call consciousness in God. It is a knowing of the Truth because God is Truth. As Aristotle might say, like knows unto like. Because God is not conscious (nor consciousness) Faith is not conscious. Beliefs are conscious.

9:50- An obscure certitude, undefinable knowing, Truth sensor, an undefinable presence in us, that IS Faith.

10:35- One of the "other people" that she heard this from was me. I relate the experience of knowing something she had said was True (and unexpectedly so) in my first book, God's Big Experiment.

13:13- Faith deals with the unknown because it is unknown, is unknowable, and knows by "not knowing". There's a Zen koan for you! It knows God which is not knowable (by the mind) because it is not of the mind.

13:37- She appears to have just contradicted herself by both saying it is not an experience and the most mystical experience we have. Well, what else could she call it in that moment? Elsewhere she calls it a presence and distinguishes it from the action we call Grace. Her whole point is that it is non experiential. It doesn't matter what we call it as long as we remember it is non experiential and therefore the greatest of all Graces.

14:24- People going to church hoping to get some experience may actually be working against the development of Faith. As Faith increases, experiences decrease. It's not that experiences are bad. They make life interesting. It's that they must ultimately be transcended along with your desire to make life interesting.

16:12- It is exactly at **that** moment, when the self goes down completely, that Faith gives rise to Vision. The "Beautiful Vision" is not an experience. It is seeing what God sees as God sees it.

16:47- She says later (min. 32) while talking about St. Therese de Lisieux that you can't have more or less of God, only more or less of self. God is not really "increasing". It just seems that way as there is less and less of self.

17:45- She's not overly concerned; she just "wonders" how her knowing of Christ and the Trinity did not fit in with the proverbial "party line". In her spiritual life she trusted God completely. It's only after her spiritual life is over, once she begins to reflect on the difference between the "party line" and what God gave her to know, that she sets off for five years to write The Real Christ.

18:06- She raises her eyebrows when she says "addicting". How many people do you know who are addicted to spiritual experiences?

21:00- People who want to depend on beliefs and their correctness insist on the primacy of the mind over the heart. (The heart here being understood as a part of the brain and not that which pumps blood.) No one is advocating wishy-washy, willy-nilly belief systems. She is just saying that standing on the firm foundation of Faith is more rare and more secure. She's obviously influenced here by St. John of the Cross, and the apophatic tradition in general.

21:12- Only once one really trusts faith does one then have the courage to question one's beliefs. Until then, one is too afraid.

21:45- Christians need to question their beliefs but lack the Faith to do so. From the way she understands Faith, it would not be correct to say that people have faith in their beliefs. People believe their beliefs correspond to Reality while the only object of Faith is God, not beliefs.

22:22- She tried to understand the perspective of the atheist while studying at university. It was an eye-opening experience of empathy for her, but ultimately, she was not successful. In response she got a rolling-on-the-ground “belly laugh”. The answer she got was probably in proportion to her effort. She tried so hard that, when she realized the futility of her efforts, she was rolling on the ground because of the absurdity of her efforts.

23:05- The degree to which you have been brainwashed can be measured by your fear to question your beliefs. While most of us don’t question our beliefs very often, that is different from being afraid to question them. You have to be open. She grew up questioning her father relentlessly on matters of faith and thereby exemplified free thinking (as well as exemplifying being a typical kid).

24:00- Perfect faith is perfect love and perfect trust. They seem to be equivalent terms.

24:33- She really saw the difference between faith and belief when, after self “went down” she could see what had died (beliefs and their possibility) and how it was different from what remained (faith giving rise to vision).

25:35- Another nice koan: It seems dark because of the excess of light. She explains it some.

28:28- We come to know God exactly as the humanity of Christ knew God. We recapitulate the interior life of Jesus.

29:03- Here we have another definition of that which has no adequate definition: Faith is Truth in us.

29:46- The idea that as God increases our beliefs decrease sounds a little counterintuitive to most. New idea number thirty-three? I think we can stop with the counting... The thing is, you don’t need your beliefs once you know God. What do we come to know about God? Whatever Christ knows, because we will have the “mind of Christ”.

34:30- Another spiritual nugget to ponder, “One drop of God is fullness of God.”

38:30- Here, as elsewhere, she says that our transformation into Christ means “becoming God’s own”. There is no longer a you for your body to belong to once your body doesn’t need consciousness any more. Perhaps your body didn’t really need consciousness in the first place. The question then becomes, “Why do we have consciousness when all it does is veil the Divine?” Personally, I think it’s to ward off death for a few years while we decide what we are going to do with it.

39:29- Finally we understand why Faith has no adequate definition, because it is God and has been all along.

40:41- Hence the title of my first book on B., God’s Big Experiment. The only thing that kept her from “going batty” throughout it all was Faith. Some people would say she went a little “batty”. Even if that were true (and I don’t think it is), she could hardly be blamed given what she had to put up with from God.

41:05- Something (Christ?) still survives here after the human limits have been stretched beyond the breaking point.

43:00- Again she is using the term in a different way when she says everybody has Faith. Many people will claim they don’t, to which she might reply, “You don’t have beliefs but you have Faith.”

43:50- Once Faith is understood this way as a universal, it will become something that unites, not the cause of wars.

44:25- The reason why one has to test one’s Faith in the marketplace is because it is lack of fear. Whatever you know you should do but are afraid to do is exactly where your faith is weak. Growth in the virtue of courage is only made through practice of it.

### **Questions and Discussion:**

1:01- This question, “What do you think the next stage in your spiritual development might look like?” is an excellent one. We are so infrequently spiritually introspective that the wise person would answer this question for him/herself right now.

1:50- She means to say “unasked questions” and not “unanswered questions”. She just said, “I may not have the answers”. She wants people to ask their questions. She is not promising answers for them.

4:46- I think the word she was looking for here was “litmus test”.

10:24- She **did** gather contemplatives together to discuss the spiritual life until shortly before she died of ALS. She was in such an advanced stage of the disease that she couldn’t hardly speak for her last couple of gatherings.

11:15- She doesn’t know that people have already written down their questions and that she will be stuck answering them (and rambling) for more than another hour.

17:00- People forget about their existential union with God then assume that their soul is eternal. Then, they figure if they don’t merit Heaven (and who does?) then they more likely merit Hell. But because God could simply cease your existence rather than keep you alive so that you could suffer could only be the act of an ogre. That’s why she calls the concept of Hell “silly”.

19:30- When she says “spirit and body go together” I think she means the experience of having a spirit and being a body leave at about the same time. For her it was within days of each other. The time between the resurrection and ascension may not have been very long either.

21:00- You can’t see the resurrected body because it exists in a dimension beyond the senses (just like the Eucharist).

22:45- Two points for Plato over Aristotle. Aristotle, being more of a physician, held that only the perceivable is real. Plato, being more of a metaphysician, acknowledged the existence of unseen universals.

23:45- The Ascension is “bigger than the Resurrection” (in terms of its amazingness) yet relatively little is made of it in Christianity. Why? Because it threw a wet blanket on the apostles hope for the establishment of an earthly kingdom.

24:03- She makes a big deal over the difference between revivification (such as that which happened to Lazarus) and Resurrection. In Spanish, unfortunately, the

word commonly used is “resuscitated”. God does not perform CPR. It’s a spiritual event.

25:10- She doesn’t do a great job answering the question here and she doesn’t really give an example. She does claim that there is often an order to God’s revelations. The first to be perceived is the Logos or God in Nature. Then that leads to seeing the indwelling Spirit because God is in all things. Then the throughout all and the within all lead one naturally to search out the beyond all, or Transcendent.

26:35- God has no self because, if It did, there would have to be tritheism. You would have one God with a self saying, “I am God” and another and another.

26:55- God is not three persons in any way that we have become accustomed to using that term. Therefore, the term person should not be foisted onto God.

28:41- Because the Stoics could not countenance any separation between matter and spirit, they would “pound the ground” when asked, “Where is the Logos?”

29:40- Many people think that simply because other species are less intelligent that they are therefore more understandable. Bernadette is saying we don’t understand other species, particularly how their instincts are caused. She will assert that animals are not conscious very soon. She means not in the same way humans are conscious. Consciousness should probably be thought of as something that exists in different ways along a spectrum. Many species exhibit some form of consciousness but none demonstrate the sustained (and sometimes obsessed) self-absorption that humans do.

31:19- Our current Aristotelian understanding of human nature as body and soul is paltry and spiritually meager because the third term “spirit” has been “knocked out”. How might our understanding of ourselves be different if we were taught that, besides having (or rather being) a soul, we also have a spirit which is that in us which sees God? Apparently, I Corinthians 2:11-13 was part of the baby that got thrown out with the bathwater when the early fathers wanted to be sure that we understood that man is not composed of the Holy Spirit, which is correct. Yet it was not wise to rely exclusively on an Aristotelian anthropology which only has the body/soul.

32:53- Many people will be jumping out of their seats in protest after hearing her say that God is not self-conscious. By self-conscious she does not mean embarrassed or ill-at-ease. She means self reflective. According to B. God has no self. This is what it means to be human and not divine. The divine has Its own way of knowing that exists beyond the need for a knower.

33:45- Persons exist for as long as they are needed. Then they go “down the tubes”.

34:30- You don't have to think of no Self as some amazingly exalted spiritual experience. It is simply the cessation of a function. Something stopped working in her brain. What stopped working happens to be central to what it means to be human. So, in a way, you could say she went beyond human nature. Either that or you have to say she reverted to some (very much less verbal) form of the species that existed before radical self-consciousness (a.k.a. “the fall”) became the norm. Since I don't think God makes mistakes or has regrets, it seems she was being pushed beyond the human limits for some unknown (but probably very good) reason.

34:15- When she says the Fathers “were behind in a number of ways” she means they did not have the much clearer grasp of consciousness (or reproduction for that matter) that five hundred years of following the scientific method has given us. The “faculties of the soul” (memory, intellect, and will) is the way Christians in antiquity talked about consciousness. She uses different words like self-reflexive and self-reflective. As she says, take it or leave it.

34:30- Self-awareness ceases in the resurrection and ascension. For most people this happens AFTER the death of certain key organs. This is why she says death is not a physical thing but a spiritual thing. She continued to live without any sense of being alive because she was spiritually dead with Christ (not a person) in Heaven (a different dimension altogether is the dimension of human existence beyond consciousness). Because she had no self awareness, she no longer had a spiritual life.

35:00- You don't have free will in Heaven because you are not free to love anything but God once you see/know God. Your will dies from atrophy because there is nothing else that it could conceivably want besides God in Heaven. It might not sound like “fun”, but you will be completely fulfilled.

35:50- It is because people get “pretty hot” when you attack some of their views that we almost can’t have rational dialogue about religion. This is tragic because we so desperately need it. If we could lean on Faith which “is strong” we could question our beliefs which is something she thinks Christians “should do”. Notice, the body/mind is still thinking, yet without a thinker.

36:36- We are going to share in the Divine Nature. Maybe as self is consumed, we simply become nothing but nature expressing itself without anyone to get in the way. We share in nature's knowing. We share in the Divine will. We are the process of evolution happening in every moment.

36:56- When she says the Fathers said “all over the place” that we would be transformed into the Logos, she is saying we will become the invisible intelligence that guides nature, which is the **reason** for its existence, **and** gives **to** things **their** reason for existence, and is inseparably united to matter.

37:18- Jesus was not abandoned by God. It FELT to him like he had been when the Spirit, having completed its function, left him. Obviously, he was still one with the Logos because that is what he then revealed. What else is there left after the Spirit has gone? Only the Logos in oneness with the Transcendent. All things happening always “in” the Glory of the Transcendent. This was Jesus’ Spiritual Death which happened sometime shortly before his physical “death”.

37:35- She basically dismisses the question because she is unable to self-reflect any longer. “That’s all water under the bridge” means self is gone and a whole lot went with it.

37:40- Notice her very first reaction to a question about the existence of hell is, “Don’t ask me that.” She says elsewhere, “Let no one play God here.” She didn’t want to be anyone’s guru-with-all-the-answers. She didn’t have all the answers. She only knew about her experience.

37:46- Basically, the woman was asking if we too must descend to hell before we can be resurrected with Christ because how it went for him is how it will go for us. She is definitely saying “no” to “this kind of thing”. Then she explains the difference between the Jewish “sheol” and the Latin “Inferno”.

37:55- “There is no such thing as hell”. She doesn’t even know where “they dug it up from”. Sounds like pretty good news to me!

39:24- Stuck for three days in the tomb? I don't think it was more than 48 hours. What is he going to do there? Jesus: "Nothing else to do here stuck for three days, might as well descend into Sheol and free all the great saints of the past waiting for me there!"

39:39- She's calling the most common understanding of the resurrection something "that might pacify a five-year-old." She's calling the party line juvenile. She somehow learned early on in her spiritual life to not rely on her senses.

43:08- She's describing being shocked and scared by the message she got to the question, "What did you die for?" This is that truth sensor going off in her again, notifying her of the truth even though, at age ten, she couldn't fully grasp it.

43:21- She knew, at the age of ten, that no one understood the true meaning of the crucifixion. She didn't know what it was either.

44:06- She learned by direct experience what the true nature of the crucifixion is. To some it might be considered heresy because it implies that just as her person was gone, so too is Jesus'.

54:30- The revelation of what Christ is by Jesus was not the revelation of God to humanity, as much as it was a revelation of Man to Man.

56:16- The problem originating at the "top" would put the Vatican's Congregation for the Defense of the Faith at the top of B.'s dart practice target sheets.

56:25- Do you agree with her that Christians are ready for the Truth? Even if it looks a little different?

57:40- I got a chance to ask her once if the Incarnation was simply the revelation of an already existing reality or if it also changed something about humanity. Her reply was that there was a change. This would go along with the early Fathers who held that before Jesus there was no Christ. In other words, there was a real change that took place in the species with the revelation of the Incarnation.

59:09- Her intended word was probably "anthropomorphic".

59:39- It's interesting that she would get more "guts" as she got older because, without a self, there is nothing to give "guts" to, and no subject to have "guts". I think she was feeling less and less bound to her past and the Catholic terminology

that went with it. The body, realizing that its time was “coming up here” may have also wanted to communicate something a little bit different in her final book, The Real Christ, than the kinds of things she was communicating about the difference between the Divine Christ and the Human Christ in her other books.

1:01:48- The same view, that God united Itself to common human nature and not to a particular person, was also held by Erigena the Scot, Duns Scotus the Irishman, and Meister Eckhart the German in the early Medieval period.

1:03:50- If you find yourself nodding in agreement to her presentation of the Alexandrian view, that is because it is the view pretty much universally accepted throughout Christendom (to the extent that that even exists anymore). The Antiochian view has been widely neglected and she is saying it deserves another look.

1:04:25- The plural of logos is pronounced “lo-goy” and not “lo-go-eye”.

1:05:39- We have to get beyond the term Incarnation (and some other terms from the working tradition) because it does not include the soul.

1:06:14- I love how she shouts this. She shouts only a few times. “The Logos was already in Mary!”

1:08:42- What would that look like after the dust had settled? Christian theology without the confusing use of the word “person”? Whatever it would look like, she is about to say that it would give us a “real view of Christ”.

1:09:19- Most people don’t know that the Logos is not a being because they have not even heard of the Logos. If we have three persons, we have to have three beings.

1:09:35- Interesting that she calls universal human nature here a being. That’s certainly one way to look at it, that we, as one species, are one thing. Another way would be that the “form” or “idea” of humanity could never be a being. She asks her friends what they think about the issue in one of her last “retreats”.

1:10:17- The man Jesus was not treated as a full human being because his soul is not included in the word incarnation. This probably affected early Christological development.

1:11:07- Her understanding of Christ was always as something “right smack in the middle of the Trinity” and NOT just the revelation of the Logos or united only to the Logos.

1:13:00- She’s gone over this before. There is no hell because God would have to keep you in existence to suffer the pains of hell, and God is not an ogre. Perhaps we should add a little “umph” to this statement because she is making it for the third time by remembering that she said earlier that nobody wants to throw all that sin and hell “junk in the trash more than God.” In other words, if she is correct, we have to come up with a whole new rationale for the crucifixion. It’s already there in the Tradition with people like Eckhart and Duns Scotus. We just have to uncover it.

1:15:17- There are about five seconds between when she says to the question, “Is everybody saved?” the response, “Don’t ask me” and, “Let nobody play God here” and, “I tend to say yes.” It’s a perfect example of how she was unable to self-edit because she had no self.

1:15:36- She thinks all of creation is too marvelous to be a mistake. Covid is not marvelous for human life, but it is certainly a marvel to all the scientists trying to kill it.

1:17:00- What would it look like for “people” to “give up their beliefs”? Would it look more accepting of the unknown? Would it look more tolerant? Would it look more humble?

1:17:19- I think she meant to say “I don’t want anything to do with that belief” and not, “I don’t want anything apart from that belief.”

1:17:45- She’s advocating intellectual humility here. Probably most difficult for theologians, professional and armchair alike.

1:17:55- I love how the greatest mystic of all time asks ten people (who are probably half asleep) if there is anybody “else who has any other little thing to ask here”. After explaining the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension in an entirely new light, you would think there would have been hundreds. But as she states, she is “no speaker” and “hates” to talk. She didn’t want many questions to start with, much less dozens more. So, she chose to remain unknown.

1:19:40- “The Real Christ has been all but lost to Christianity.” I think the word “but” is important here. It is not completely lost. She says elsewhere that there “will always be a few people who do understand the Real Christ.” With so many references to the early fathers like Irenaeus, and the Antiochian School of Christology, perhaps the Real Christ is something that could be salvaged from the theological wreckage of the last 1,700 years. Couldn’t we just admit that the “fathers were behind in a number of ways” and do a much better job of incorporating the findings of science for the last 100 years into general catechesis?

1:20:15- She’s calling for a revolution in terminology. Use of these terms has been sloppy. She is calling for precision precisely to bring to the light of day God, the Logos.

Here, as with one of my other disks, it is too scratched up to play the last twenty minutes. If someone else could be so kind...

I thought it would be nice to finish up this study with a bit more on the Logos because it seemed to be so important to B. So, here’s some stuff on that (along with some stuff on the Eucharist because it is inseparable):

### A Thought Experiment

I’m just going to start toying with an idea here. This is literally a stream of consciousness writing warmup. Before going too deeply into Stoicism and their beliefs about God and the universe, I just had the idea to consider for a moment that those two things may be the same thing. It is worth remembering while we explore Stoicism that Bernadette herself said she was a Stoic at least twice. So when we read later what she wrote about Stoicism, even if it is incorrect, we should remember that it basically reflects her own views.

If the universe is God, and God wants humanity to know that, what would God probably do to communicate that? “The horrible disease that was taking him away was also preparing him for the resurrection.” Death is a blessed release. You become the universe when you become God. The Logos is handed over to the Uncreated Transcendent. What would God do? God would probably inform a little girl that she was not going to have a life of her own. As for what she

wanted, forget it! God had a plan and she was assured that that plan would be completed before she died. So that the universe could communicate something...

Near the end of her life Bernadette Roberts spent over five years researching the early Church and maybe where it could have gone a little awry. That book is called The Real Christ. She died (peacefully in her sleep) within a year of its publication.

Again, I have never really thought about this before, that God and the Universe might be the same thing, until just now. Yet I am suddenly reminded of an experience I had as a boy. I must have been around 10. I was always interested in anything mystical or strange. I could be caught mischievously perusing the metaphysics section of the local B. Dalton book store at 12. Anyway, I was ten and I was watching a program about aliens and how they are so bad for us. I just remember they said that, in terms of the Alien's religious beliefs, they worshiped the universe itself. I got a shock (or a fright) because I somehow instantly knew that that was true. I didn't know how I knew, and I certainly could not explain it to anyone. I've never told anyone about it.

I've only felt that feeling one other time. (Bernadette would call it Faith and distinguish it from belief.) The other time was when I was finishing up a useless degree in philosophy (the best things in life are useless) at the University of San Francisco. (I was planning on becoming a Zen Buddhist monk after graduating. I wanted to go on after that and get an advanced degree from the California Institute of Integral Studies in Eastern Philosophy.) I mentioned that I was planning on becoming a monk to my friend (who also happened to be Valedictorian) and who, to my surprise and chagrin, mentioned my plans in his farewell address in front of a thousand people. Yet, at that moment, I alone knew that I would be doing no such thing. I had been changed only very recently and turned around in an instant. It was two days after leaving a Bernadette Roberts weekend retreat. I am sure it has happened to lots and lots of people.

I am sitting in the Zendo, doing Zazen, minding my own business when, all of a sudden, wham! There's God. And I suddenly feel so ashamed of running from it my whole life. I start to cry and I have to keep the noise of my sniffing way down because you're supposed to be able to hear a pin drop. After thirty more minutes, we bow to the Buddha and file into the dining hall for some on-

property grown salad and organic grains. The first half of the meal is in silence. I practice eating with my left hand to develop mindfulness. I notice I am somehow different but I can't put my finger exactly on how.

Then they clap together two long thin pieces of wood twice to indicate that it is appropriate to talk. Pleasantries are exchanged between strangers. The monks mostly keep to themselves. An attractive woman sitting across from me strikes up a conversation. She can clearly see that I'm glowing and have a hard time not laughing throughout all the silence. Our conversation is strangely anti superficial. At the end of a very brief conversation, she writes down her number and hands it to me! I was shocked. No woman had ever done this to me! Of all people! Confused, I look within to kind of get my bearings or figure out how I feel about this whole thing. What I see shocks me. Instead of feeling any emotion whatsoever, there is only a black hole. It is very strange.

Rather than being happy or excited or scared or whatever, there is just peace. I'm just curious. I wonder how long this will last... So, I walk around the hippie-chic river valley of Green Gulch Zen Center toward the sea. Everything seems more vibrant as I walk towards the sunset. I pass a brown and white dappled horse on my left as I walk the path. When I get to the beach I drop down to my knees and just give thanks. I give thanks with tears. I give thanks for the parents that adopted me at birth. I give thanks that my wonderful biological mom didn't abort me. I give thanks for being born in Northern California.

I watch the sun set behind the clouds and stay till dark. As I walk back, still curious how long this will last, I feel so complete, unafraid, and at peace. A full rising moon leads me back to my makeshift room in the basement of the zendo with an orange lightbulb. I take off my boots, get (still dressed) into my sleeping bag on the floor (because it's cold). Directly across from my face, about two meters away, are my black leather boots. Lying on my side, staring at them, there is a sense of oneness with them. Because there is nothing here, no object to be separate from them. There is just this oneness.

The body is tired and is falling asleep. Thoughts from the subconscious gradually begin to emerge on their way to dreamland. In these thoughts and memories there is always an "I" in them. I remember what that feels like. It hurts. It's a tightness in my solar plexus. It goes away and I am one with the boots

once more. Again, as I drift into sleep somehow connected to the ability to visualize or fantasize is the feeling of “I” again and I remember what that feels like. Then the peace comes back and I forget what that felt like. Then I fall asleep.

I wake up the next morning and it is painfully clear that my ego has returned. It’s not that I’m grumpy because I couldn’t sleep. It’s just very obvious that it is present. Not freaking out. Just present. In the difference between the two states of consciousness I perceive a tremendous difference between how most of us live with ego and how we are meant to live on this earth. I liken this vast difference to some type of enlightenment experience, but only somehow in a Christian context because basically I came to believe in God. Only it’s not the Santa-Claus-with-son-and-bird type God.

The obvious question is, of course, why. The answer to that is the other time someone said something that I absolutely knew had to be true but I didn’t know how. That someone was Bernadette Roberts.

It was just two days before this conversion experience. She was winding up her weekend retreat with us on Sunday morning. She was kind of rambling and I wasn’t following it all exactly when, in a passing way, she happened to say that “we are just here to love and serve God”. Those words I could almost see fly from her mouth to my heart. They pierced my center and I suddenly knew they were true, even though I didn’t believe in God! I was in a bit of a conundrum. I began thinking really hard about what God was to me. I could never forget this experience.

All of this is just to say that when I heard those words “they worship the Universe” I also felt that this had to be true even though I didn’t know how. Now that I think about it a tiny bit more, I’d probably be more comfortable, in terms of my own intellectual integrity, to say that practically it doesn’t matter (in terms of daily behavior) between worshipping the universe as God and worshipping the Logos which is uncreated and not available to the senses as God. It looks the same, and everyone has their own God anyway.

So when we listen to what Bernadette has to say about the Logos, let us always have in the back of our minds the possibility that the worship of the manifest universe could look an awful lot like the worship of the Un-manifest Logos.

## Ch. 2 Logos as union of matter and spirit

Here is the first quote:

Ens p. 57 “I suggested that man’s notion of matter-versus-spirit might turn out to be the reverse of what it has traditionally been thought to be; namely, God might turn out to be pure matter or permanent substance, and matter might turn out to be pure spirit or God; in other words matter and spirit may actually be identical. What this would mean is that the scientist turns out to be the contemplative, or deep-sea fish swimming around looking for the Sea he is already in; while the contemplative turns out to be the unwitting scientist who has already come upon pure substance without realizing it.”

This is the format of the last part of this book. It’s a series of quotes in a specific order that will hopefully gradually become clear to you, and my comments and explanations. My goal is not necessarily to edify, only to explain. I think the Truth itself is so beautiful that I don’t need to try to edify.

Right off the bat it seems we have a list of terms we would like to define. “Permanent substance”, “pure matter”, and “pure spirit” pop right out for starters. Most of this book will be a careful, gradual exploration of important terms. Most of us have gotten used to being a little more comfortable with the unknown lately. It’s been so dark for so long we have learned how to see in the dark. So you will forgive me if I beg of you the favor of living with a little uncertainty for a few pages.

Still, I think this is the first of many truly remarkable quotes. The scientist who thinks he’s looking at matter is actually investigating the world of the spirit while the contemplative who thinks she’s looking into the spiritual world is actually looking into the physical world at its origin point. Notice she doesn’t just say they are the same- matter and spirit. She says they are opposite and opposite of what is commonly understood by those terms. How she came to that conclusion we will see later. Yet, right out of the gate we see that this lady is either crazy or, if she is right, is ushering in a Copernican shift in our understanding of the relationship between science and spirituality. Could it be that we are literally in God?

