



FRANCIS VINEETH VADAKETHALA CMI

Footprints of a Philosopher-Theologian Mystic

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The Mystic Thinker Francis Vineeth



Let me reproduce from my *Radical Following of Jesus' Gospel* (2020), pages 67-68 and 240, two insightful observations of the mystic thinker Francis Vineeth about people. They are not merely abstract thoughts but his personal experiences. They also reflect his own life rooted in faith and characterized by simplicity. Fur-

ther, they are a sample of how he expresses his sublime thoughts in an artless and appealing style.

First of all, Vineeth says that there are two types of people: persons of reason and those of faith. The former, meeting with things they cannot understand, would immediately start questioning and complaining. They want immediate explanations and arguments. Unable to wait for a while, they get headache and feel irritated. They also go about knocking at ev-

ery door, disturbing others, too! The persons of faith, on the contrary, when presented with something that they cannot understand, would right away recognize it to be a mystery of God that is beyond their grasp. Instead of raising questions and insisting on immediate explanations, they would gently say: "Well, here is a mystery of God which is beyond the power of my limited reason. I am happy patiently to wait for God's time to come when he would himself explain it to me in his own manner. In the meantime, I am happy to enjoy contemplating the mystery! Such people are never impatient or irritated, nor do they have any complaint or demand. They are ever so calm and cool, quiet and serene, full of confidence and optimism. This is what Mother Mary was: a person of faith, ever treasuring God's mysteries in her heart and delighted to contemplate them while patiently waiting for God's time to come when he would himself be pleased to unveil them to her (Lk 2:19, 51). How nice!

Vineeth's second observation is that there are two

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categories of people: persons of things and those of being. The former want to have everything as their possession while the latter are concerned about the being of things. For example, suppose in one morning while walking in the garden you come across an unusually beautiful and fragrant rose flower. If you are a person of things, you would instinctively look around to make sure that there isn't anybody watching you, and then break the flower and have it in your hand. You are quite happy that it is now yours! Then you take it to your room and keep it on your table in a glass with water. You are extremely happy that the flower has now become exclusively your possession! But you don't think of the consequences of your action. First of all, you have destroyed the being of the flower for it is not going to stay alive and fresh for more than a few hours. But you would say: "I don't care for its being; at least for a few hours it is mine and that is enough!" Secondly, you have deprived the entire human family of the beauty and fragrance of the flower, for it is now in your lit-



tle room away from the reach of all others! But you are totally unconcerned about others! How selfish you are! On the contrary, a man of being coming across the flower would say: "Let it be there as long as possible; it should live long!" He is concerned about its being and life. He would also say: "Let all others too come and enjoy its beauty and fragrance!" He is least selfish, but other-centred, broadminded and generous!

Similarly, in another fine morning while strolling in your farm you find everything so well and flourishing. You are legitimately happy, indeed. Then you look to the neighbour's farm. There the things may be still better. But you are not happy; you feel restless! Grossly jealous!! Being a person of things, you are able to enjoy beauty and goodness only in things that belong to you! You are selfish and narrow-minded! On the contrary, a man of being enjoys and appreciates the beauty and goodness of things no matter whether they belong to him or not. They are good and beautiful in themselves that is all!