

One of the worst things about being human is that we get bored. And that's OK- boredom is part of the human condition- it's part of what the psychologist Victor Frankl called the "*existential vacuum*" or the sense of meaninglessness or emptiness in our lives we've all felt at one point or another. And this is not just a philosophical theory- even when we have the time we desire to do what we want, then we don't want to do anything. It's called the "*Sunday neurosis*" and so instead of doing constructive things that we say that we want to do, we get lost in passive activity- like vegging out on the couch or in simple busyness or in temporary pleasures- all things that ultimately don't satisfy us and which are never enough.

Because it's not a bad thing to enjoy yourself or to veg out on the couch once in a while and recover from the struggles of the week that we just went through- it's actually a good thing- and it's not a bad thing to be busy either but if we think we're going to find meaning in these things, then we're mistaken. And as Frankl famously said in his book *Man's Search for Meaning*: "*Meaning is something to discover rather than to invent.*" Or in other words, the meaning of life is already here and it's ours for the taking and we better take it if we want to be happy and fulfilled and become the person we are meant to be.

And as Christians we know that this meaning of life is self-evident- it's Christ- the expression of God that pervades all of creation and which gives meaning to a universe that, without Christ, would fall into nothingness. To use a crude image, Christ is what glues everything in the universe together and keeps it all going and is bringing it all back home. For Paul, because of Christ, there is a cosmos and not chaos- there is meaning and not meaninglessness.

This is the "*cosmic Christ*"- the idea that comes originally from Paul's letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians- especially the reading we heard today- and later adapted by St. Bonaventure and Duns Scotus and the Franciscan school of theology- the idea that says that God

created the world through Christ, the world exists through Christ, and that the world is returning to God through Christ. So Christ is Jesus of Nazareth but he's also a whole lot more.

And what that means for us is that we can be aware of Christ around us and within us and we only have to want to do so. We can develop what spiritual writers call a contemplative awareness, a loving awareness of Christ's presence that is always in front of us but that we miss because we have so many other things in the forefront of our minds and our hearts instead. Not that these are bad things- of course not. What preoccupies us and what worries us are usually things that are related to how we take care of ourselves and the people we love and these are things that we have to deal with. We're not hermits and so we can just turn off most of the world. Christ and the world are not mutually exclusive/ We find Christ in the world.

But as you know as well as I do- what a world we live in. The violence and the chaos and the injustice doesn't seem to stop and even when something horrific happens- there are too many examples to list, tragically- we almost want to ignore it because it's too much to take. And the hope that we have to hold on to is that things are being done to address them, way more slowly than we'd like but things are happening because there are people who do care.

There are people who see that Christ is being obscured by ignorance and prejudice and selfishness and these people are doing what they can to make sure that the light of Christ is able to shine- a little bit at a time maybe but you have to give it a chance to do its work and to transform persons and groups and even societies. We were not made to live with violence and chaos and injustice and all that and as long as people are trying to see Christ in all things and all persons and all situations, then things will continue to change for the better- again more slowly than we may want, but you have to start somewhere.