

1918–1956

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“ Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either -- but right through every human heart -- and through all human hearts. This line shifts. Inside us, it oscillates with the years. And even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained. And even in the best of all hearts, there remains ... an unuprooted small corner of evil.

Since then I have come to understand the truth of all the religions of the world: They struggle with the *evil inside a human being* (inside every human being). It is impossible to expel evil from the world in its entirety, but it is possible to constrict it within each person.

Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*
1918–1956

Tags: **evil, good, heart, religion**

...fuge and strength that nothing in creation
...God. Spiritual poverty is a phrase which
...spect of Christ's relationship to the Father,
...was so anchored and rooted in the life of his
...nothing could possess him, neither his desire to
have these stones into bread'), nor his desire to count
and be important ('Leap down from the pinnacle of the
Temple'), nor the desire to have power ('Take over the king-
doms of the world'). St Paul expresses his own poverty of
spirit in these words to the Philippians, 'I know how to be
poor and I know how to be rich too. I have been through my
initiation and now I am ready for anything anywhere: full
stomach or empty stomach, poverty or plenty. There is
nothing I cannot master with the help of the One who gives
me strength' (4:12-13).

Spiritual poverty is the opposite of diffidence, timidity, self-
depreciation, crawling servility. It is the possession of all
things in Christ, while being possessed by none, the ability
to enjoy and delight in God's creation without being trapped
by it, it is the discovery of our true identity, that we live in,
through and with Christ in the life of the Father. Spiritual
poverty is spiritual freedom. Exalt

'Blessed are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of
heaven' (Matt. 5:3). This, the first of the beatitudes, is a
summary of the whole of Christ's sermon on the mount, the
essence of his teaching.

Actual poverty, if understood as material deprivation
imposed on people against their will, is not a good, but an

God's Work, creatures among other creatures. We are God's handiwork, a small but unique part of God's great ongoing work of art. But we are also invited to participate in the process by becoming co-artists and co-creators of the future.

We do this by allowing God to work in and through us. When we are radically free or on the way to radical freedom, divine energy can flow through us *unhindered*. This divine energy, which is also called the Holy Spirit, is infinitely powerful, creative, and healing. We see it at work in the prophets, the mystics, and the saints, but above all in Jesus. The Holy Spirit is Jesus' spirit.

In Jesus we see an unlimited self-confidence that was not a display of ego but a manifestation of radical freedom. His complete trust in God enabled the divine, creative energy of the universe to perform extraordinary miracles of healing in the people around him. Francis of Assisi was physically weak and sickly. At times he could hardly stand on his two feet, but that did not hinder the energy, the desire, and the determination that drove him on.

We can do the same. We can give up doing our own thing and begin to participate in the only work that is effective and real: God's Work. That may include many of the things we are used to, but in a new way, with new motivation. Most people are motivated by their egos. When we are motivated by feeling unmo-