

4th Station of the Cross (Modern) - Peter denies Jesus



“Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. “You also were with Jesus of Galilee,” she said. But he denied it before them all. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said.

Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, “This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.” He denied it again, with an oath: “I don’t know the man!” After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them; your accent

gives you away.” Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know the man!” Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: “Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.

~ Matthew 26:69-75

Nicolas Tournier. (1625 -26) Museo Nacional Del Prado

Each of the disciples represents an archetypal energy that we need to work through to attain enough awareness for us to gain wisdom and compassion. In all traditions 12 represents the number of energies that have to be integrated to create wholeness – whether we are talking about the 12 lost tribes of Israel, the Gods of ancient Greece or the zodiac.

This external story tells of the betrayal and denial of the Christ within all of us. Think of the Christ consciousness within – your own soul - and its recognition that it has created a part that will deny itself. This is the ego defense of denial, flight and betrayal.

So Jesus had to work with the inner dynamic of how he betrayed his own soul, denied himself, and did not stand by himself in full truth and complete support. And in the same way the story calls us to recognize within ourselves, ways in which we do not stand in truth, deny ourselves, and do not support ourselves fully. What is the dynamic within ourselves in which we run from our suffering and so deny ever finding the Christ within and being in allegiance to this Inner Light? When have you sworn up and down that you do not know this Self?

If we see the story as being about Peter instead of the Christ, then his denial is of his own spiritual Self and identification with the external collective of the time.

Denial of any aspect of ourselves represents a splitting rather than a reconciling, fear rather than love, rejection rather than acceptance. How are these dynamics operative within yourself? How do you deny your Spiritual Self and identify with the external world? How will you reconcile yourself to yourself? What purpose did this denial serve when you were young? How does it serve you now?

The story is also about prediction, which would represent a pattern of repetition. We know the future based on the past. How do you predict you will once again betray your Highest Self? How has this caused you bitter weeping?

The story says this happens before the dawn— before the cock crows two times - Peter will have disowned Jesus three times. 3 is always a symbolic number. The dawn is symbolic as well. What do you think this means? Consider the idea of the trinity meaning completeness. Here we have a trinity too – The Christ, the Denier, the Denial.

“The acceptance of oneself is the essence of the whole moral problem and the epitome of a whole outlook on life. That I feed the hungry, that I forgive an insult, that I love my enemy in the name of Christ -- all these are undoubtedly great virtues. What I do unto the least of my brethren, that I do unto Christ. But what if I should discover that the least among them all, the poorest of all the beggars, the most impudent of all the offenders, the very enemy himself – that these are within me, and that I myself stand in need of the alms of my own kindness -- that I myself am the enemy who must be loved -- what then? As a rule, the Christian's attitude is then reversed; there is no longer any question of love or long-suffering; we say to the brother within us "Raca," and condemn and rage against ourselves. We hide it from the world we refuse to admit ever having met this least among the lowly in ourselves.”

~ C.G. Jung