

The Crack in Everything

Leonard Cohen's song, "Anthem," states in the refrain: "There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in." It sounds a lot like Paul's statement about carrying "the treasure in earthen vessels" [2 Corinthians 4:7](#). These are both much more poetic ways of naming what we unfortunately called "original sin"—a poor choice of words because the word *sin* implies fault and culpability, and that is precisely not the point! Original sin was trying to warn us that *the flaw at the heart of all reality* is nothing we did personally, but that there is simply "a crack in everything" and so we should not be surprised when it shows itself in us or in everything else. This has the power to keep us patient, humble, and less judgmental. (One wonders if this does not also make the point that poetry and music are a better way to teach spiritual things than mental concepts.)

The deep intuitions of most church doctrines are invariably profound and correct, but they are still expressed in mechanical and literal language that everybody adores, stumbles over, denies, or fights. *Hold on for a while until you get to the real meaning, which is far more than the literal meaning!* That allows you to creatively both understand and critique things—without becoming oppositional, hateful, arrogant, and bitter yourself. Some call this "appreciative inquiry" and it has an entirely different tone that does not invite or create "the equal and opposite reaction" of physics. *The opposite of contemplation is not action; it is reaction.* Much of the "inconsistent ethic of life," in my opinion, is based on ideological reactions and groupthink, not humble discernment of how darkness hides and "how the light gets in" to almost everything. I hope I do not shock you, but it is really possible to have very "ugly morality" and sometimes rather "beautiful immorality." Please think and pray about that.

Adapted from [Spiral of Violence: The World, the Flesh, and the Devil](#)

I would suggest that you read 2 Corinthians 4:1-18 and reflect on what St. Paul is saying. Part of the work we are engaged in through "Appreciative Inquiry" has to do with what St. Paul writes and also with this reflection from Richard Rohr. Allow the light to shine through your cracks. Don't try to cover them up – it's the only way grace gets through! Please think and pray about it.

Fr. Al Jewson