

August 7, 2020

Rainer Rilke, the wonderful late 19th early 20th century poet, is in my mind - a person to be trusted in matters of the human.

His poetry incarnates some of the most intimate and some of the deepest movements and intimations of the human soul, even for people who think there are no souls or who have never allowed themselves to feel their soul's presence.

You may think that you do not like poetry or that you have no time for poetry or that it is silly, but if you spent some regular time, 5 or 10 minutes, every few days, if you cannot do it every day, you would be surprised.

If more Christian preachers and teachers had as much experience with their souls as Rilke does with his, I would bet that our churches would be filled, they would be much, much more kind, and the world would be better because Christians would understand far better, not only what Christ taught but what he meant.

His Duino Elegies alone can give you insights and ideas that offer consolation, peace, hope, and love for your own life, just as it is today in ways that you cannot imagine, just Google them and give it a try.

Rainer Rilke, like all of us, was conflicted at times, unsettled, lonely, filled with longing for a love which would fill him up, some would say he was a philanderer with women, others, that he was unstable not able to keep commitments, he was a loner and, yet, he craved intimacy.

On marriage he said, "The point of marriage is not to create a quick commonality by tearing down all boundaries; on the contrary, a good marriage is one in which each partner appoints the other to be the guardian of his solitude, and thus they show each other the greatest possible trust."

Most people do not look to marriage as a path to solitude, I would surmise, but in reality, a marriage can only lead to solitude one form or another, so you might give his words some thought.

In his Book of Hours, he writes, "Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror. / Just keep going. No feeling is final."