

**ANOTHER
NAME
FOR EVERY
THING**

with

RICHARD ROHR

Season 1, Episode 11

An Incarnational Way

Brie Stoner: Welcome to season one of Another Name for Every Thing, conversations with Richard Rohr exploring the core themes of his new book, The Universal Christ.

Paul Swanson: As mentioned previously, this podcast is recorded on the grounds of The Center for Action and Contemplation and may contain the quirky sounds of our neighborhood and setting. We're your hosts. I'm Paul Swanson.

Brie Stoner: And I'm Brie Stoner.

Paul Swanson: We're staff members of The Center for Action and Contemplation and students of this contemplative path trying our best to live the wisdom of this tradition amidst shopping for a show on Netflix, snuggling with toddlers, and the shifting state of our world.

Brie Stoner: This is the eleventh of twelve weekly episodes. We're jumping ahead for this episode and will be discussing the appendixes of The Universal Christ. In this conversation we lay out the two frameworks that Richard includes at the end of his book, "The Four Common Worldviews," and "The Pattern of Transformation."

Paul Swanson: One more thing before we get started, we want to hear from you in two different ways. The first invite is for your participation in a podcast listener survey. We want to know what you think is working so far or what we could do better. And the second invitation is for those of you who have a burning question related to the themes of The Universal Christ. Please send them our way. After the season is over, we'll gather as many listener questions as we can and bring them into conversation with Richard and then share his responses with all of you. To participate in the survey, or to submit a question, head over to cac.org/podcast and follow the instructions. We want to thank you for all your time listening to this series. It is you, the listeners, that help spread this message around the world. Thank you.

Brie Stoner: Richard, at the end of your book you lay out two appendixes that offer us some really helpful tools to understand how to frame reality, or how we tend to frame reality, which you've titled, the first one is called "The Four Common Worldviews," and the second one is "The Pattern of Spiritual Transformation." I really appreciate that from the start you lay out that these are tools, right?

Richard Rohr: Yes, yes.

Brie Stoner: No one perspective or frame—

Richard Rohr: No. No. No.

Brie Stoner: --is going to say it all. But I still found them really helpful.

Richard Rohr: Good.

Brie Stoner: Starting with the first one, "The Four Common Worldviews," would you give us an overview—

Richard Rohr: Overview.

Brie Stoner: --of what each of these are?

Richard Rohr: All right. Remember your worldview is not usually consciously formulated. It's the set of assumptions, usually unquestioned, that you look out at life from. You don't look at it, you look out from it. The very common one that recurs in many different forms in all of history is what I call "the spiritual worldview." Now, just as you'd hear it, everybody will say, "Well, that's what we should be, spiritual people." But actually it was given a term in Christianity that was usually called a heresy.

The term was gnosticism. It's been given many different titles throughout the centuries, but the basis of it is that you emphasize spirit, ideas, concept, mind more than anything physical, material, or touchable. A lot of—and I don't use "New Age" in a negative way. Don't hear it that way.—a lot of the New Age is that way, "Your mind creates reality." And there's truth to that, but when it becomes the whole truth that everything is just the inner spiritual world and all of this is not to be taken seriously. Of course, I'm convinced that much of Christianity was, in fact, gnostic. Yeah, all that mattered was the soul. We used to save souls. We didn't save people or history, souls. So, the best way to get away with being a heretic is to condemn it and then you can get away with it because no one notices, "Well, you're the same thing."

I know this isn't true of all of Christianity, but I'd say large portions of it have been very spiritual worldview. All that matters is spirit. That's why we could ignore the planet, ignore racism, all the rest.

The second worldview that actually is the rarest in all of history and really only began, I guess, in the last three-four centuries, would be materialism. That the only thing real is this, the physical. Most people would not assent to it philosophically, but practically, practically, I would say most Americans are materialists. The only real thing is what you can shove around, what you can earn, what you can get. Now we get into sentimental notions of spirit like on Valentine's Day today. But it's not really spirit. It's usually sentiment, substituting for spirit. Dialectical materialism, that would have been unthinkable in most of history, although there were several Greek philosophers that certainly were already playing with it.

Richard Rohr: Then the third is probably the most common confusing. I don't know if it's the best word, I struggled with this. Did I call it the "priestly worldview" in there?

Brie Stoner: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Priestly, which believes that there is matter and there is spirit, and the job of the Church, we think we're real fervent in doing this, is to keep reminding everybody that there's spirit. Listen to most sermons, they're the priestly worldview. "God is involved in this." But the very person who will say this is a control freak. Do you understand?

Brie Stoner: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richard Rohr: So they're really materialists, but they think that if they keep using God-talk, this is going to be our job to convince people that God is sort of involved. That's all they believe. We call it the "God of the Gaps," and priests' or ministers' sermons remind us that God is part of the deal. You got it? "Yes, father. God is part of the deal." But it's still, most of the time, a materialist worldview, or a highly anthropocentric "all that really matters are human beings." So, that, in my opinion, is the most common substitute for the real gospel: help people to

put matter and spirit together.

Brie Stoner: And it's transactional, too.

Richard Rohr: Very transactional. Yeah. What I believe is the authentic gospel is the incarnational worldview that dares to believe—now most Christians weren't told this—that matter and spirit were never separate. It's not our job to put them back together, but to recognize, and honor, and draw upon the realization they are one and have always been one.

That's why my seminary professor said, and it seemed scandalous, but that Christianity was more influenced by Plato than by Jesus, because Jesus is a living exemplar of incarnationalism. That's his role, in fact. Plato does admit there's matter and spirit, but they're in contention with one another, and the battle is never really resolved. They're fighting one another, which is a dualistic worldview. It honors spirit, but it again lays the foundation for the priestly worldview, where, "Okay, there is matter. There is spirit. If we work real hard and pray over things, and sprinkle them with holy water, and say a Mass there, they will be spiritual." You see?

I love to tell people when I have Mass here on Sunday this week, the sweet Mexican people come with their rosaries. "Father, bless my rosary." I always have to give my little sermonette and say, "You do know it's already blessed. All I'm doing is reminding you by this ritual of blessing that it is blessed." "Yes, father. Go ahead, would you bless it, please?"

Brie Stoner: Do it anyway, though.

Richard Rohr: Do it anyway. So, I do my priest craft and I do that. It's okay if it takes a ritual to remind us, then rituals are good. But what usually happens is the ritual becomes the substitute for the recognition. "Yes, Father." They didn't hear what I said, "It's already blessed. It's already holy, but to help you know that, I'm going to touch it, I'm going to sprinkle holy water on it, or I'm going to bless it. Okay, father. Please do that." It's not their fault.

We naturally live in a dualistic world where all of it is matter and we have to cram spirit into it by our techniques, our methods, and our blessings. So, if you can get just that little first appendix somewhat clarified, it prepares you for the whole book. In fact, I think in my first edition of this, I had that as the second chapter or the first chapter. But they recommended this, and I think it was good.

Brie Stoner: What you're bringing up in that example of the rosary is something that I'm fascinated by in that we just want to project that seeing outside of ourselves. In other words, "I need you as a priest to bless this for me, because I can't accept"—

Richard Rohr: "I can't imagine."

Brie Stoner: That's right.

Richard Rohr: That's very compassionately said. That's exactly what I think. God understands that,

and I understand that.

Brie Stoner: I want to spend just a little bit of time with this incarnational worldview since, ironically, I think as Christians we haven't really grasped this as the gift of our tradition at all.

Richard Rohr: No, no, no.

Brie Stoner: You have this line where you say, "This view relies more on awakening than joining, more on seeing than obeying, more on growth and consciousness and love than on clergy, experts, modality, scriptures, or rituals. The code I am using in this entire book for this worldview is Christ." And right at the start of that line, I see all the ways we don't actually want to live out this worldview because we do want to join, and obey, and have an authority figure tell us what to do. I guess my question is, how does this incarnational worldview require us to actually have faith not just in God, but in ourselves, too?

Richard Rohr: Well put. That's where it should end up. That's why that Walcott poem where he's peeling his own image off the mirror and realizing, "My god, they've always been one, God seeing of me and my attempts to see God." Yeah, what do I say? I mean, you said it so well already.

Richard Rohr: I find myself in the question and answer sessions at conferences and groups, so glad that I wrote the book *Falling Upward* and I'll tell you why. Because again and again, and you're going to hear it now, you probably get tired of it, I come back to this distinction of what you need to get started and what you need to end up, and they're two different sets of rules. It really does answer so many pastoral questions. I would say an early Christian needs Father to sprinkle holy water on it. There's nothing wrong with that. That's okay, and I'd still do it myself. If Pope Francis was here, I'd be the first one to step forward, "Pope Francis, would you bless my rosary?" [laughter]

Paul Swanson: And he would say, "Richard, you know—

Richard Rohr: "Richard, you know it's already blessed." "Oh, damn it. Will you touch it? I want to say the pope touched my rosary." That's just our incarnationalism. We want touch. We want physicality. But it's the same thing He's saying to Mary Magdalene, we don't need the touch anymore. It's everywhere. Yeah, I think that's the best answer I can give.

Don't deny people growing. What's true at one stage is not true at another stage. And when you judge from your stage, which is what we're doing with most of history now. When does this transferring of judgments from one century to another century become counterproductive? Because, I think when it becomes iconoclasm and anger and culture wars, you're assuring the pushback we saw, frankly, in the election, that a whole set of America feels stupid, feels like, "I can't call God 'He.' That's all I've ever called God." Why do we need to humiliate a person who's still at that level of growth. That's why I taught spiral dynamics or still teach it to the students to help us honor

earlier stages.

And, of course, the stages in history mirror the growth from an infant to a teenager to an adult, and we're in early adulthood in Western Civilization. And what do early adults want to do? Throw out their youth and their teenage years.

Brie Stoner: Yeah, pretend it didn't happen.

Richard Rohr: Pretend it didn't happen instead of include and thereby transcend.

Paul Swanson: There was something you said just a moment ago that I wanted to follow up on regarding the blessing. You unlocked for me, I think it's from Paul, "the priests of all believers," where for me growing up I thought well that means that anyone can become clergy or priests. But the essence that I see as I've grown up is we all have that immediacy with God—

Richard Rohr: Yes.

Paul Swanson: --and it is the "priest of all believers," but it's not a role to play—

Richard Rohr: It's not a leadership role.

Paul Swanson: --or to aspire to. That's it.

Richard Rohr: It's an awareness that I can help people know that matter and spirit are one. Now that's my language. You couldn't put it that way with the normal crowd. But you know Jesus never calls himself a priest, not once. If it wasn't for the letter to the Hebrews, the word wouldn't even be applied to him. But because of that, we started applying it. By the 3rd century the clergy, which itself is hard to justify, took it to themselves. Thank God you protestants rejected it. But then you created ministers in the same ilk, because we do need leaders. But how can we create leaders who are simply functions within the body of Christ? Or charisms within the body of Christ instead of a higher class? That's what we call "clericalism," when it's not any longer a leadership function, it's a class system. We Catholics are worse at that than you are by far, by far. But we still haven't gotten rid of it.

Paul Swanson: I feel like the incarnational worldview—

Richard Rohr: Yes, go ahead.

Paul Swanson: --invites us to get rid of that. I want to read another quote from you on this, and then ask you to unpack it.

Richard Rohr: I hope it's a good one.

Paul Swanson: We'll see. Here we go.

Brie Stoner: Probably not, Richard.

Richard Rohr: Probably not. Third rate. What is it?

Paul Swanson: You write, "The incarnational worldview grounds Christian holiness in objective and

ontological behavior instead of just moral behavior.”

Richard Rohr: That’s right. That’s right.

Paul Swanson: That’s a beautiful line, and—

Richard Rohr: Thank you.

Paul Swanson: --there are some big words in there that I want you to unpack.

Richard Rohr: I so often say this is my foundational idea. It’s all taking myself too seriously. But this is my foundational idea, because it’s the gospel, is that the basis for holiness is ontological. The problem is you like to hear me say it’s all from the beginning original goodness, creation, spirituality. Any lesser teaching is not the gospel. It is not good news because it creates a competitive, comparative culture of egos trying to outdo one another—impurity codes or merit badge systems. It just takes ever more sophisticated forms.

When I was able to talk at Merton’s 50th death anniversary, I said what Merton did for many of us in his teaching of the true self/false self, was restore an ontological basis for holiness. And I could see everybody went to their page and copied that down, because that’s a new phrase. In fact, two people told me at the dinner afterwards, “We’re going to have to reflect on ‘ontological holiness.’” I said, “Oh, I am so glad I said that,” because that helps a lot of people get it. But we’re talking about at every level.

It does change everything with the way the gospel was meant to change everything and democratize human beings, because the ontological holiness is equally granted to every act of creation. And there’s not more granted to Jews, and not more granted to Catholics, not more granted to white people.

Wow, it was meant to be a social revolution, and it ended up being tribalism instead of a social revolution.

So, thank you for letting me talk on that a little bit. It’s foundational. Holiness is ontological. It’s inherent. It’s the indwelling Holy Spirit, use whatever word you want, but it’s a hidden wholeness to use another phrase from Thomas Merton, that it takes us our own life to recognize in ourselves and then in you too. What I gratuitously accept in Richard, I have to gratuitously accept in Paul, and in Brie. That’s the deal.

Paul Swanson: I’ve been steeped in “The Four Worldviews” in Appendix One, and I wonder, Richard, if you could take us to the heart of Appendix Two on “The Patterns of Spirit and Transformation,” which I know we’ve danced around it in a couple of ways—

Richard Rohr: We have already.

Paul Swanson: --but just to give a forthright overview for those listening of what you’re doing.

Richard Rohr: You’ve heard me do it. But when I do this for the students, I think a lot of us are visual learners. When we can geometrically, “Oh! Oh. Oh!” so I made it as simple geometrically as I could. And I say to the students in the first week, “Picture three boxes,” and they all

start writing three boxes. This is good. That's what I want them to do. The first box let's call "order." The second box let's call "disorder." The third box let's call "reorder."

I believe after studying all the world religions that each in their own way, they have discovered that this is the deepest path of spiritual growing up, that you most go from "order," that you recognize you largely created yourself, you were given it by your family, and your culture, and your religion, and it's good. It gives you great comfort. And it tells you you're a part of a coherent universe, life has meaning, and it's going somewhere.

Maybe it's naively understood, but a seven-year old could only understand things at a naive level. So, God must have been very patient with growth, but the trouble is, at least in my church, we were satisfied with the Baltimore Catechism seventh, first-grade level, as mature understanding of that, and all you did was repeat the formula. Well, it maintained your sense of order, and that was good. But when you repeat the cliché too long, it's no longer order, it's rigidity. If it's self-centeredness, it's control. You're not looking for truth, you're looking for control. To hold onto my first explanation of order that I was given in Minnesota in 1970. That's the only order, which any pedagogue would recognize, well, you understood that with your fourteen-year-old mind, and that's good start. Let me repeat that: "a good start." In fact, it's the easiest start. People who don't start with the basic order have a much harder time growing up.

And that is the world we're living in now. I create this somewhat artificial date, but it's approximately true, somewhere around 1968, we moved from what we call "modernism" to "post-modernism." Modernism was built on an assumed order. Order was relished. Father knows best. There was an answer for everything. It gave you comfort—false comfort—and very happy. When I was a nineteen-year-old novice in 1961, I think all we did was laugh. Just everything was fun. We lived in this tight, Catholic, Franciscan, joyous world where all that mattered was God, and we were going to be friars of God, when you know what you're about, and you know where you're going, and there's a team with you.

I think that's what a lot of people do with the military. It's their first experience of *communitas*, this must be real. Wherever you first experience *communitas*, authentic friendship, relationship, this imprints itself on the soul as truth. Why wouldn't it?

Now, here's the folly of the cross, to use Paul's language. What will come into every life if they grow up, if they leave home, if they leave their homogeneous group, if they live even to their mid-30s, where I guess several of you are, something will happen, which shows their perfectly described order, what Merton calls your "private salvation project." Did I use that phrase in the book? I should have. It doesn't matter.

Paul Swanson: I can't remember it.

Richard Rohr: "Your private salvation project" will show itself not to be true all the time. That's the most you can allow. Okay, there's some strange exceptions, but we should convert them to get back in control. The big ones are those big six: death, suffering, sexuality, gender is always a huge one, where, "Well, it isn't always true."

Many people never can get out of their first box. It is so comforting to accept the tragic absurdity of the human situation, the exceptions to the rule that it isn't always that way.

Now, what I'm pleading for is "include and transcend." I'm not saying it's never that way, but it's not always that way. Those people who can hold on to what was good about the first box, what was good about being a Baptist missionary girl in Spain trying to convert us Catholics.

Brie Stoner: You're welcome. [laughter]

Richard Rohr: There were some really good things about it. I mean your love of scripture to this day comes from your Baptist beginnings. But this is most of the middle of life. I will say from twenty-five to fifty-five for sure is the step-by-step integrating of exception, disaster, tragedy, grief, death, non-sensicality, if that's a word, "She isn't like us." As you move outward, the constant experience of otherness, otherness, otherness. Damn it. Other! That isn't the way we did it in Minnesota. That isn't the way we did it in Kansas. It must be wrong, which is the ego's first assumption.

So, it's often, to use the Biblical New Testament phrase, it's called the "forgiveness of sin." Now, you've heard that word so often it's been so spiritualized, but that's what you're doing. When you can learn the mystery of the forgiveness of what first looks like sin to you, and is just exception, it's not like you, it isn't intrinsically bad. You want to make it so by your projection. You want to make it dangerous, and it is to your culture. I would say, easily 40-50 percent, no more than that if you include all continents, more than 50 percent of humanity never make that break.

The only way they can do it comfortably is to stay in a homogeneous group, and keep condemning, and criticizing, and excluding all who are not in that group. I think that's what Jesus is fighting, because that's where his Jewish culture was in the 1st century, proclaiming their own superiority and trying to tighten or circle the wagons around that group. They were a prophecy for what all of us do, if we will not go to the second level.

Carol Gilligan even says you must start with self-love, legitimate self-love, then you move to other love, that's the middle box. It takes a lot of people time to get to other love, and the final goal is universal love. That's all I'm saying. The third box, reorder, is universal love. Now, here's the important point, that there's no non-stop flight from the first box to the third box.

Brie Stoner: Wait, what?

Richard Rohr: You must go through disorder, disaster, tragedy, absurdity, exceptions: the first gay person that enters your life, the first Mexican who doesn't know English, whatever it might be. And you have to admit, you're sort of irritated. "Why don't they learn English? Why isn't their sexuality like mine?" It's all radical egocentricity. But you'll find some wonderful spiritual Bible quotes to justify your egocentricity.

So, those people stay in the first box forever. The longer you stay there, the sicker it gets. The more it's a disguise, denial game. And so, by the end of life, these people tend to be cognitively rigid. You have to because you have to deny so much of apparent reality. You have to. You have to circle yourself in your small, little group.

Now, let's balance that out so you don't think I'm against conservatism per se. What is even a bigger problem for us now if we're honest is the amount of people who are formed or

born—you were probably born after '68, were you? Yes. See, he's one of them. Look at what a terrible disaster he is. People born after '68. Well you were too.

Paul Swanson: I was too. Yeah.

Richard Rohr: All three of you.

Brie Stoner: Surprise.

Richard Rohr: We won't mention. Well you were born in a Minnesota homogeneous faith-filled community.

Paul Swanson: Right.

Richard Rohr: So, you got your order.

Paul Swanson: Yep.

Richard Rohr: And it sounds like maybe your family was a little more floating-- Yeah, yeah. That's the norm after '68. So, your family is not sick, they're not unusual, but it does make it harder to integrate disorder when you started with disorder. You follow the logic of that?

There's no coherent meaning. Everybody's on his own. That's almost the last thing Merton says before he's electrocuted. "You're all on your own now." That's what he's referring to. There's no cohesion. He saw in 1968 itself, the birth of post-modernism. So, if modernism believed in order, post-modernism is an immense overreaction after the two world wars and the Holocaust, and the rediscovery of racism, and sexism, and homophobia, and materialism, and militarism, which is what the '60s were about. We just said, "Damn it, there is no order. It's permanent incoherence. Everybody's on his own to create his own private order."

Now, our philosophical word for that is post-modernism. My word for it is to remain imprisoned in the second box, or trapped in the second box. You really have never been told about any universal meaning, any safety net of truth and goodness that tells you, you have inherent dignity. Most people haven't heard the gospel in that sense. So, for these folks, it is harder to grow up as a post-modern, second-box person where there's no solid ground on which to stand. Doesn't it strike you, I'm sure it has, since we're all white in this little circle, that most of the major mass murderers are always white people?

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: They thought they had their order, and it's showing itself not to be at all true. And they just want to destroy what they perceive as the disorder to their inability to deal with disorder whatsoever. Of course, most of them were not given, but a very naive version of order. So, this is what we're facing right now, the collapse. How do you collapse any further than the second box? It's already an inherent collapse. The only people who can tolerate it are those who have a first box to hold onto. That's us. I mean, yeah.

I came from a stable family, religion that thought it was the best, a country that thought it

was the best, a male gender that thought it was superior to you women. That just gave me all kind of validation, validation, every mirror I looked in, validated me and told me how wonderful I was. That is very helpful. But every one of those illusions have to be burst. That's what's happening. And a lot of people are saying, "I'm not going to let go of it. It's all I've got is my male gender, or my white skin, or my so-called Christian religion," which ironically usually isn't Christian at all.

So, that ability to put those two together in a harmonious hole is reorder, that's the third box. Our word for that is "resurrection." Let's just give it theological words: life, religion (of Jesus), the passion and death of Jesus; the rejection all of his life by the powers that be of religion and state. Jesus faces disorder as soon as he becomes public. I have to believe that in those thirty years he was observing some of the Samaritans were more loving than the Jews. So he just used his common sense.

He met several syrophenecian women who were more generous than His Jewish compatriots. And maybe that's why we don't hear anything about Him until thirty, because that's what you should be facing when you go out into the world. You move from Minnesota, and Michigan, and say there's a bigger world than Michigan. But a lot of people don't do that. I challenge you to find a single myth in history, including Buddha and Jesus themselves, where the protagonist doesn't leave home. They always leave home and go on a journey, which means they get out of their prison. Everybody does it the way we do it in Kansas. That's what I call the pattern of transformation.

Paul Swanson: Thanks for that, Richard.

Brie Stoner: Thanks. Yeah, it's so applicable in so many different ways.

Richard Rohr: It really is.

Brie Stoner: What I was thinking about is even as many of us have grown up in a certain form of order, of Christianity—

Richard Rohr: Certain form, yeah.

Brie Stoner: --many of us have gone through these experiences of disorder where we felt the limitations of the theological boxes we were being handed. The exclusionary nature that it's almost like shoes that just didn't fit anymore. We take them off. Going through this period of disorder that has for so many of us felt a little bit like wandering around in the desert. I guess—

Richard Rohr: Or loss of belief. It will feel like you're losing faith.

Brie Stoner: Exactly. Because it's like, "Well, I guess I'm not that kind of Christian."

Richard Rohr: "I guess I'm not a Christian."

Brie Stoner: Therefore, maybe I'm not a Christian and then you are in this state or desert landscape for often a long time. It could be a decade, it could be longer. What I feel about this book is that you're giving us a reorder, a resurrection of Christianity and providing—

Richard Rohr: I hope so.

Brie Stoner: --a new lens, a new frame that is big enough. It's cosmic.

Richard Rohr: I hope so. Thank you for seeing it that way. That's certainly my desire. It's almost like they don't even know they're being taught that. They just find themselves in the reorder box and say, "What happened?" I see this in the Living School. How did I get here? But I know I'm here now. I can't go back to the clear box of order, and I can't remain imprisoned in disorder. There's the holding operation again. The two arms of the cross, which is resurrection.

Paul Swanson: On a very personal and microscopic level, just seeing that in my own relationship to church where once I entered disorder, I can't—

Brie Stoner: Can't go there.

Paul Swanson: --be part of this anymore.

Richard Rohr: Oh, I know. It's so hard.

Paul Swanson: And to be able to come back and say, "Well, it's not perfect. I can see it for what it is, but I don't have to have it be the end-all be-all if it doesn't reflect basically who I think God is. But there's a lot of freedom. I know I have a lot of other areas in my life that haven't come back to the reorder, but this metaphor is so helpful for me, because I think it's not only the big pattern, but it also plays out in different levels of life.

Richard Rohr: Thank you. God, do I agree. And you're speaking for so many people of your generation. And even the generation ahead of you are mostly in the same entrapment. When Martin Buber said, "All real living is meeting." It might just sound like a clever phrase, but the way most people traverse this is by meeting a good person who isn't Christian or my denomination. By having as a friend a black person who you just love, by meeting a gay person who is not sick and perverse. All real living is meeting.

If you have no gay friends, if you have no black friends, you'll pretty much remain in your prison. And one of the common prisons today is just whole groups reveling in disorder. Just four letter words nonstop, drinking, loud—nothing against all loud music—loud music that doesn't allow you to hear anything else, that is what really concerns me about pop culture in America today. There is no one to tell them that there is anything other than disorder. What's going to happen when they face death? Oh my god. It just makes you want to cry.

Brie Stoner: You have this phrase that you say, "We all come to wisdom at the major price of both our innocence and our control." That's so piercing and so true. As we wrap up this conversation, I'm curious what is an experience in your life, this week, of—

Richard Rohr: Why do you always make it this week? [laughter] Go ahead. Say it all.

Brie Stoner: --paying that price of your innocence and your control, but still arriving at the resurrection, at the reorder, at the Christ moment?

Richard Rohr: Okay. As you know, since I had my heart attack, I have to go at least three times a week to

do cardiac rehab and work out on these torture machines. That's all they are, pure torture. I hate every second of it. It's an act of faith to go. And having gone now for thirteen months, I guess it is, I've gotten to know some of the other people who are there at the same time, and they're all old codgers at my place. We're not young, beautiful bodies like you would go, which makes it much easier. No one's showing off their beautiful bodies, because none of us have a beautiful body. It makes for real safety I think for all of us.

But, sure enough, I found my own ways to resent somebody. Elias, you know who drives me there, and takes me, and helps me with some of the movements, and so forth—you probably won't be able to record this, but I'm going to say it—he met this one guy while he was working out named George, an old guy. Elias says to me, "I found out George is a Republican. He loves Donald Trump." So, I look over at George on that machine and have nothing but disdain for him. How could anybody vote for Donald Trump? How could anybody be a Republican," you know, just revealing my own prejudices.

This happened the day before yesterday. Elias went over there, while I'm doing my torturous workout, he's talking to George. And, of course, my mind, "Well, why does he want to talk to him for? He won't have anything to say." And so, as we're driving home, I say, "I saw you were talking to George. Did you have a nice talk?" He said, "Let me tell you about what he has gone through." He told me the story of his life, just the way people talk shortly. A lot of death, a lot of suffering, a lot of failure.

I said, "Why have I wasted a second projecting ill-will towards George who I never knew? I just heard he was a Republican and he voted for Donald Trump, and it allowed me in my mind resent him, you see? I hope I see him, I'm going this afternoon. I don't know that we'll become best friends, but I know I have no need to even project inner-dark energy on him.

I've got a little sign by my door at my office. It's from one of the early Greek poets, "Just know that every human being is carrying a secret and heavy burden." Every human being is carrying a secret and heavy burden. Wow. If we could just believe that every day, our need to hate anybody would be taken away. I think the crucified Jesus is saying that from the cross, "I know you're all carrying a secret, heavy burden, and all I can promise you is your suffering is the suffering of God." That's my only answer. Wow, that's good. If that's not redemption, I don't know what redemption is. But do you see now the cross as an act of solidarity, divine, absolute solidarity with the human situation instead of an atonement theory, paying a price.

Paul Swanson: One thing I love about that quote, too, is also the acceptance within myself that it's okay that I'm carrying something heavy, and that I don't need to remove that before I'm okay.

Richard Rohr: Okay.

[music playing]

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