



Interviews

NOVALIS AUTHOR INTERVIEW

S.T. GEORGIUO *THE ISLE OF MONTE CRISTO: FINDING THE INNER TREASURE*

Novalis : *What inspired you to write this book?*

S.T. Georgiou: *The Isle of Monte Cristo* is the third book published by Novalis that centers on my understanding of the divine Presence in everyday life (the earlier two volumes are *The Way of the Dreamcatcher* and *Mystic Street*). The original impetus for these spiritual meditations was my chance meeting with the poet Robert Lax in 1993, on the Greek isle of Patmos. Lax, a close friend of Thomas Merton, had lived as a hermit on the "Isle of the Revelation" since 1964. His creativity and rustic simplicity pointed to how everyday living--if conducted mindfully and reverently--can impart a kind of holiness. I went back to visit him numerous times until his death in 2000. In my journey from searcher to student to a professor of religion, he was certainly a mentor.

Novalis : *It must have been a great privilege to meet and be mentored by Robert Lax. What was the most important thing you learned through spending time with him?*

S.T. Georgiou: To place one's total faith in God's love. *Agape*, (the highest and purest form of love, centered in the holy love that sustains the cosmos), was for him a vital "flow." He believed that we best meld with this divine current when we relax, become still, let go of trivial desires, and quietly pray ourselves into our Maker. In this transcendent state, our daily activities have the potential to impart blessings because they are wholly rooted in God.

What advice would you give to "spiritual seekers" or people looking for "agape," the type of love that you write about?

Lax used to say, "Put yourself in a place where grace can flow." I think that's important for anyone who yearns to find the love of God.

In Scripture, we read how God speaks in a "still, small voice" (1 Kings 19.12). How can we hear that voice if it's drowned by the chaos of worldly living and by the noise of our own egos? We've got to go to a "place apart," (be it a church or mountaintop), and cultivate an inner stillness. There we can better hearken to the foundational love of the Creator, and then proceed to share it with whomever we meet.

Novalis : *How does the title of your new book relate to Alexandre*

Dumas' celebrated classic, "The Count of Monte Cristo"?

S.T. Georgiou: In *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Edmund Dantes (the hero who becomes the Count) is wrongfully imprisoned. When he escapes years later, he finds an enormous treasure hidden on an isle called "Monte Cristo" (the Mountain of Christ), and uses it to inflict vengeance on those who imprisoned him. But eventually he realizes that all vengeance must be left to God--all we can do in this life is keep on loving, praying, and wait on His justice and mercy, otherwise we add to the pain engulfing this world. That's where my book begins. The real treasure is found in the inner isle--the "Monte Cristo of the heart." This precious treasure must be used for good, only for good. Hence the subtitle of my book: *Finding the Inner Treasure*.

Novalis : What are some of the major themes in your book?

S.T. Georgiou: That the real journey in life is interior. Everything we are doing in this life is preparing us for our ultimate meeting with Christ. So as we move through life, we become increasingly aware of His Presence. There are many signs and clues along the way, both in nature and in everyday happenings. As many saints have expressed, we are called to find the Christ in all things. We are called to be ministers of creation.

Novalis : How can readers find out more about you and your work?

They can always visit my website at www.spiritcurrents.com. And if any school, institute, or retreat center would like me to give a talk, I'd be happy to come out and "share the wealth."

Novalis : Are you working on a new book?

S.T. Georgiou: Right now, teaching at San Francisco City College and the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley is keeping me busy. But if I keep on "putting myself in a place where grace can flow," (as Lax said), I trust that a new project will eventually manifest itself, all in the Lord's good time.

Purchase your copy of "[The Isle of Monte Cristo](#)" by S.T. Georgiou today!



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