

TRUSTING IN THE GREAT CATCHER

I was most fortunate recently to attend a performance by the wonderful Rambert Dance School (formerly known as Ballet Rambert). They are an amazing dance company who combine classical ballet with the best of contemporary dance and often include dramatic acrobatics in their choreography. As with all dancers and acrobats, the members have to work closely together and trust the other dancers to hold and catch them as required.

I first experienced Ballet Rambert about twenty years ago in Australia. On that same visit I also attended a Boys' Brigade Leadership Training Course for 18-25 year olds in Brisbane. One of the sessions on that course focussed on reliability and trust and that as a leader you should engender both. The session included a number of young leaders literally falling backwards, sometimes from considerable height, trusting that their fellow leaders would catch them...and they did!

Henri Nouwen, one of my favourite spiritual writers, tells of an enlightening time he spent as a chaplain to a team of Dutch acrobats. These acrobats did all sorts of fantastic twists, turns and jumps including some long distance jumps at height during their exhilarating performances! Nouwen recalls being enthralled by the acrobats flying through the air and by other acrobats catching their colleagues as elegant as dancers.

One acrobat commented to him that as a flying acrobat, he had to have *complete trust in his catcher*. The public might think that it is the flyer doing the work but it is in fact the catcher who has to be there with split second timing. The secret to being a good acrobat team is that the flyer does nothing and the catcher does everything. When I fly to my catcher, he said, 'I have simply to stretch out my arms and hands and wait for him to catch me and pull me safely over the apron behind the catch bar. The worst thing the flyer can do is to try and catch the catcher. As a flyer I am not supposed to catch the catcher- that's his

job. If I did, I would break my wrists or his. A flyer must fly and a catcher must catch. The flyer must trust with outstretched arms that his catcher will be there for him'.

In my favourite daily office, Compline or night prayer, the final words of Jesus before he died are repeated over and over, 'Father into your hands I commend my spirit'. Dying is trusting in the Great Catcher. To care for the dying is to say, 'Don't be afraid. Remember you are a beloved child of God. He will be there when you make your long jump. Don't try to grab him. He will grab you. Just stretch out your arms and hands and trust, trust, trust.'

Each year we celebrate the great events of Easter. We see Christ trusting in his heavenly Father , commending his spirit into the arms of God and being carried through death into his risen life. This too is our journey. Many churches keep All Souls' Day where they recall loved ones who have already made this great leap into the arms of God. Through all the changes of this life and into eternity we know that God is our great catcher and in that we can trust.

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