



September 12, 2021

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

"Anyone who intends to follow me must deny their very self, take up their cross and follow me." *Mark 8:34*

Dear Friends;

Franciscan Friar Richard Rohr Has developed a graph that can help us in understanding what Jesus asks of us when he invites us to *"deny ourselves and take up our cross."* He calls it the Cosmic Egg.

The Cosmic Egg is a way of helping us to understand where we are in relation to reality. There three levels two smaller eggs contained in the largest egg stacked like Russian Nesting Dolls.

The smallest level is called **"My Story."** This is the first period in history where large numbers of people have the time to consider their own private lives and identities seriously. This marks a wonderful achievement in the individuation of the person.

But it also comes with a downside. The first egg contains my private life, those things which make me unique, special or inferior, right or wrong depending on how "I" see it. My feelings and opinions are the reference point for everything. Unfortunately this is all most people have left: My power, my prestige, and my possessions.

This is the place where all we ask is who is watching me? How do I feel? What do I believe? What makes me unique? This will all be over when we die and it really isn't very interesting if that is all there is to talk about. My Story is not big enough to create large meaningful patterns. Some people live their whole life on this level. This small self is very fragile, and unprotected is constantly striving. This is why we are so polarized today.

The small self is intrinsically unhappy because it is rooted in nothing else. Always insecure and afraid it is always looking to be recognized. In the language of Jesus *"a branch cut off from the vine is useless."* (Jn. 15:5)

This small self is what Jesus is inviting us to leave behind in following him. The cross is symbolizes the death of our small self so we can rise to experience of life in a larger life-giving context. We must let go of this small self through prayer and contemplation; yet most people including Christians take this self as fully reality.

Jesus came from a time and culture that realized that there is no "me" without "we." One comes to understand who they are through the loving eyes of family and friends. Identity comes from where we were born, our family of origin, culture and the society in which we were raised. In Jesus' culture blood relations were your identity. This is the level of **"Our Story."**

But Jesus walks away from those cultural identifiers. Jesus walks away from his family, village and his father's trade all these make his family think he lost his mind. But Jesus does not retreat into **My Story** as we would. No. What Jesus does is move to the larger context of The Story. His family thinks he lost his mind when they find him to take him away. He is told, *"Your mother and brothers are outside asking for you."* Jesus looks around the crowd and says, *"Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God are my brother and sister and mother."* (Mark 3:31-35)

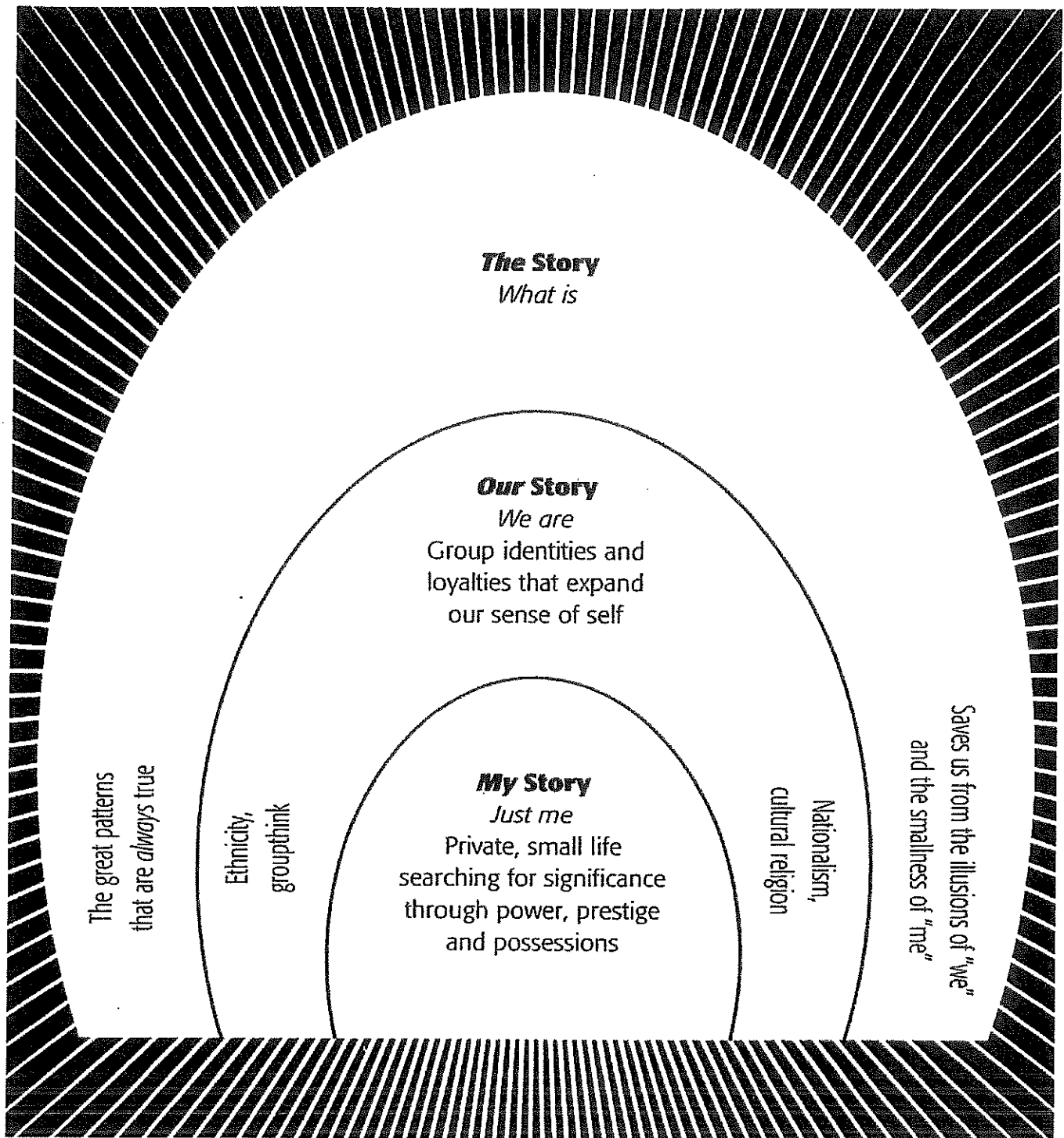
Jesus is building a new kind of family. It will be a family that is not tied together by blood, tribe, ethnicity, culture or language. What makes this family is a willingness to commit to the compassionate love and mercy of God for the totality of creation. To make that move involves a cross—a letting go. This is a move to **"The Story."**

However, when we are able to move beyond our smaller self at the right time and in the right way it will feel as if we have lost nothing at all. To follow Jesus and connect **"My Story"** to **"Our Story"** and **"The Story"** will feel like freedom and liberation. Because then we are connected to something expansive and inexhaustible. We no longer feel that life should serve us but we serve life becoming a useful citizen to this world and the Kingdom of God.

Peace,

Fr Ron

This letter is available on line/Seta cartestá en el sitio web: anne.church



*Healthy and biblical religion
includes the whole cosmic egg.*