Only soul can negotiate life with depth, meaning



Mates. I must them exciting reading.

His books have been at the top of the New York Times best self-ing, list for the past two months. A long article about him appeared in a daily paper last week. Raised a Catholic on Detroit's east aide, Moore has something to tell us about the soul. His books are about the individual soul, how we feed the soul, how our society ignores the soul. Yet his books also provide us insights into social problems.

Our congregation is hosting homeless people this week. The women, children and men whom I have talked with might be consid-

ered different from you and meYet Moore helps us see a connetion between these people and our
own condition. The homelessness
we see on our city streat is a reflection of a deeper homelessness
we feel in our hearts.

"The trash on our streets, the
abandoning of old buildings and
the construction of chesp housing
reflect our souls which, dismiss
the values of the past and may
also reflect our anger at the world.
Our trash," says Moore, "is a reminder—not yet headed by linagination— of the past we have nespected."

These are meanings for us to
ponder, Moore believes that our
soul is connected with everything
that we encounter. Places and
things have soul when they are
part of our memory. Things of the
past may have meaning and beauty even though they have lost
their practical function. Our
mania with antiques has the
quality of a search for roots in hupast. For Moore, everything, including everything thought to bare all the to have a neat definition. Yet,

this desire for definitions is itself a symptom of our lack of soul. Soul is impossible to define. It is close to imagination, to music, beauty, to the meaning of a special tree or hilleids. Soul is not so much about change as about depth. Soul grows through deep observation and acceptance. "Fulfilling work, rewarding relationships, personal power and relief from symptoms are all gifts of the soul. They are particularly elusive in our time because we don't believe in the soul ... "(from the introduction to "Care of the Soul")

Moore's most recent book is "Soul Matea." Have you ever felt a particularly strong attraction to another person? We need to honor the mystery of such experiences and sort out what they mean to the soul. Psychology and morality may well fail to lead us through such important encounters in our lives. Only our soul can negotiate iffe with depth of our personhood and the personhood of others.

The writings of Moore face us

with the question: Can we have religion or morality without soul? Is America looking for the "quick fig?" Have we depersonalized and objectified faith to such an extent that, for example, there is no deep learning from negative experience? Is confessing your sins enough to do the Job? Moore thinks not.

For Moore, even deprezsion and body illness may contribute to a person if they are examined by the soul. He is very critical of religions that seek to rid us of our encounter with trouble or pain. Such a religion keeps us from discovering meaning in the dark night of the soul. I have discovered that his observations aften.

ered that his observations are rough in the question. What is sacred in everyday life? The question challenges our unexamined assumption that everything is secular, without the sure of God's creative love. For example, ecology is not an earth science, it is a question concerning our home, our soul's response to the home in which we live.

A feland of mine went into the

A friend of mine went into the hospital for a very serious illness.

In the process he lost about 100 pounds. He told me that as he went through these life threatening troubles he felt that he was surrounded by an aure of prayer. This is a tough, down-to-earth man. I am heartened by his witness of soul. He has grown from his trying experience.

Finally, I like the insight of Thomas Moore that soul is nurtured by the simple decision to

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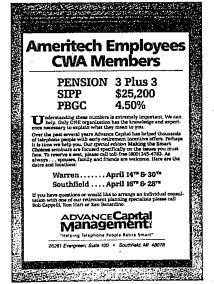
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