

4. October 2022

The Spiritual Life (Part I)

During the next few days, we will leave the usual framework of meditations to develop a spiritual theme that will certainly be profitable for those who want to follow the Lord. As those who have been listening to these daily meditations for some time will certainly have noticed, for me - Brother Elias - the spiritual formation of people is very important. I am very interested that people, after having had an encounter with the Lord, can seriously follow the path of following Christ. This is the path of holiness, to which we are all called. This will be important not only for the fruitfulness of our own lives, but also for that of the whole Church, whose mission is to bring the Gospel to all peoples.

In the month of October we celebrate two saints of the Carmelite Order who walked in a special and conscious way the so-called "interior way", both named "Teresa": St. Teresa of Avila and St. Therese of the Child Jesus. In her writings, St. Teresa of Avila emphasizes that all mystical experiences must be in conformity with the doctrine of the Church in order to be authentic. This is an important criterion for a healthy inner journey, and I will also be guided by it in these meditations on the spiritual life.

For those who during these days would like to continue listening to the meditation on the reading or the gospel of the day, we will always place at the beginning the link where you can find it:

First Reading (Gal 1:13-24): <http://en.elijamission.net/good-and-blind-zeal/>

Gospel (Lk 10:38-42):

<http://en.elijamission.net/the-primacy-of-contemplation-2/#more-6581>

The foundation for the spiritual life

The spiritual path, which we could also define as "growth in love", is usually divided into three "ways" in classical mystical theology: the purgative way, the illuminative way and the unitive way. These are accessible to every person who truly wants to follow God's call. The Holy Spirit, who is the love between the Father and the Son, carries out His work in our heart to transform it into the image of Christ. The one who is born again "*of water and the Spirit*" (Jn 3:5) is shaped by the gentle influence of the Spirit

and becomes capable of welcoming the love of God within him more and more, living in him and working in him. In short, he becomes a person filled with true love.

In order to walk and persevere on this path of following Christ, it is important, in the first instance, to lay it on a sure and stable foundation; a foundation that always remains. Indeed, the disciple of the Lord, who has accepted his invitation to follow Him, is not automatically exempt from the weaknesses of his human nature and continues to need God's constant help. He must be careful not to go astray or suffer harm on this path. To this end, it is a great gift to be able to count on a guide who has experience on the spiritual level and who can give us good advice. In case we do not find such a companion (unfortunately this is often the case), we can still count on the many aids offered by the Church for the path of discipleship, to strengthen and instruct the disciple. In the bosom of the Church many spiritual masters have arisen, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, who instruct us in the way of following Christ.

The sure and solid foundation on which we must build our spiritual life, so that we can set out with great confidence and joy on the path in pursuit of the Lord, is the love of our Heavenly Father.

If at the beginning, in our conversion, we have had the decisive encounter with the mercy and paternal love of God, we will know Him also along the spiritual journey in its formative dimension, because, as a good Father, He wants to educate His children.

Once we have placed our trust in God and live in the growing certainty of His love, God will begin His great work of transformation within us. It will no longer be just a matter of experiencing the joy of the faith we have found, but of cooperating with the Holy Spirit so that He can bring about this transformation. God wants to fashion us, who have been wounded and often even distorted by sin, in His image. Through His Son Jesus Christ, the Father presents us with the true image of man: "*Behold the man*" (Jn 19:5b). Through Christ, with Him and in Him, we have been called to the way of holiness. And Jesus, exhorting us to "*be perfect as the heavenly Father*" (Mt 5:28), invites us to this path of holiness.