



12. November 2024

## The Spiritual Life (Part I)

As we will be on a mission to different parts of America over the next few weeks, we will be leaving the usual framework of daily meditations for a few days. However, this should not be a disadvantage, as we will be dealing with topics that are important for the development of a healthy spiritual life. Even if we have heard the subject before, it is always helpful to repeat it, for as the saying goes, 'repetition is the mother of wisdom'.

After this short series on the spiritual life, next week we will meditate on the readings from the Book of Revelation that the Church offers us before the end of the liturgical year.

As you know, Sacred Scripture and the authentic teaching of the Church are very important to us. For this reason, in December, we would like to take a look at the statement 'Dominus Iesus', written by the then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Ratzinger, in which he exposes the current confusion regarding the salvific uniqueness of Jesus Christ. It is certainly a document well grounded in the doctrine of the Church, so that we are on "safe ground".

We ask you to accompany us with your prayers for a fruitful mission ahead. Let us now begin our series on the spiritual life...

### 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.