

22. August 2025

Inner healing in God Part VII

Asceticism: Sentinel of Freedom

As we gradually approach the end of the topic we have been developing over the last few days, I realize there are many other aspects of what God offers us for the healing and strengthening of our souls that we have not discussed.

In this series, I wanted to show that we Catholics have an authentic path through which our souls, wounded by original and personal sin, can be restored by God. If we walk this path with perseverance, our souls will heal more and more, and the Spirit of God will be able to permeate our beings.

As I mentioned in the first meditation of this series, I do not intend to discuss the healing of physical illnesses or serious psychological disorders. Nor will we address in this context the situation of souls under strong demonic influence, as these situations would require special attention.

Today, I want to emphasize the importance of prudent asceticism, which strengthens and uplifts the soul.

The term "asceticism" means combat or effort. This means that, with God's help, we actively struggle to regain control over our negative impulses and inclinations. Above all, it is a matter of strengthening the will.

With this concrete example, it will be easy to understand.

Suppose I have a tendency to drink alcohol excessively. I'm not referring to a pathological addiction, which usually indicates a more serious underlying issue, but rather, the tendency to drink more than is advisable, that is, to lose control.

If I allow myself to be carried away by the negative habit of excessive and overfrequent alcohol consumption, my willpower will gradually weaken, and I will become dependent on this substance. My soul will crave this pleasure and its associated effects, and will demand it from me repeatedly. Even though I am aware that this is not good for me, I will not be able to change until I make a firm decision to address this problem. It will take an

act of will, which I will need God's help to accomplish. The sooner, the better!

What we said about alcohol in this example can be applied to many other areas that might go more unnoticed. These are the aspects of my life that I don't control with my will. In one way or another, I let them exert control over me. They are not necessarily sins, although giving in to my weaknesses will certainly make me more susceptible to them. The issue is that one loses control, ceasing to be the "master in one's own house" by failing to control situations through understanding, willpower, and the Lord's help.

Asceticism, through the practice of abstinence, can help us regain this control. In the context of the subject we are dealing with, this does not mean the drastic or absolute renunciation of all natural pleasures, though this might be appropriate in certain particularly ascetic ways of life. Here, we are referring to restraining disordered passions and not letting ourselves be carried away by the impulses of our fallen human nature.

Healing the soul through prudent asceticism consists of regaining freedom and, therefore, dignity. In this way, the deep wounds inflicted by original sin can be healed.

Although the concept of asceticism is related to self-control, in our meditation, we want to focus directly on following the Lord.

Asceticism to regain freedom concerns not only our external behavior but also those areas where there is a more subtle lack of freedom. Such areas include the tendency to talk excessively, dwell too much on insignificant things, seek attention, be overly concerned with oneself and one's appearance (with the vanity that this implies), and argue about unnecessary things, among many other inclinations we may have. In short, it is a matter of striving to restore proper order to all areas of our lives where there is spiritual disorder.

Asceticism also restrains thoughts and feelings, and is the guardian of our whole life, not exercising severe control that would deprive us of all pleasure and joy, but as a sentinel of freedom. Asceticism identifies for itself deficiencies of freedom in both our inner and outer lives and allows God to show them to us. Having recognized them, it constantly strives to overcome them.

We can compare asceticism to the reins of a horse, which the rider uses to direct it. Thus, asceticism helps us undertake the path along which the Lord wants to guide us with our will and understanding.

Asceticism is a constant struggle and effort until the end of our days because we are always

confronted with the inclinations of our fallen nature, which will not be destroyed during our earthly life. However, through asceticism, we can acquire greater freedom, even if we suffer defeats, and thus we can more easily rise toward God. We will no longer be so consumed by the things of this world because we will not allow them to exert dominion over us. This also applies to our relationships with others. Inner freedom is necessary so that no disordered attachments or bonds are created, and true relationships can become ever deeper.

God is the only Lord of our lives, and we want to belong to Him completely and without reservation. Therefore, through asceticism, we ensure that God's dominion becomes a reality in our lives, without our lack of inner and outer freedom limiting it.

Meditation on the day's reading: <https://en.elijamission.net/the-love-of-ruth/>

Meditation on the day's Gospel: <https://en.elijamission.net/the-hierarchy-of-commandments/>