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ASPECTS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE
Part X
"The Willingness to Change"

Now that we have been exploring various aspects of the spiritual life over the past few days, I would like to draw your attention to something very essential. If we truly want to walk the path of sanctification, may God grant that many believers resolve to do so, then we must be willing to allow God to transform us so that He can shape us in His image.

"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:22-24).

This new self, formed according to the image of Christ, is to grow in us; a self that lives as the Lord lived or, in other words, a self in which Christ can reign and permeate His love, unfolding more and more of His supernatural life within.

God grants us everything necessary for this transformation. In fact, in holy Baptism we obtain this new life as a priceless gift. But the development of the supernatural life will depend on us and on our cooperation with grace: *"Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are"* (1 Cor 5:7).

What, then, is our part?

On the one hand, it requires the desire to become new in Christ. When we become aware of our sinfulness without fear and with trust in the Father's goodness, then we know deep down how necessary our salvation is, and we cry out with all our hearts: "Come, Lord, let me become a new person!"

This same cry resounds when we want to correspond to our vocation, but again and again we are confronted with the difficulties that come from the "old self": "Come, Lord, make me like you!"

While the first cry pleads for Redemption, so that the Lord may free us from the misery of the old self, which is selfish and inclined to sin; the second cry expresses our longing to fully correspond to our vocation and to become fruitful for the Kingdom of God. It is necessary that both cries spring from the depths of the heart.

True surrender to the Lord implies a willingness to allow oneself to be totally transformed by Him, without putting up barriers in the process. So, in order for the Lord to act, we must be willing to change. In biblical terminology, this would be "putting to death the old self".

It is certainly a challenge, because we are still often trapped in our human nature and act according to it. It has not yet become clear to us that this human nature is wounded, and that, by living primarily according to it and continuing to be locked in our own self, we will not be able to acquire a supernatural perspective.

Sacred Scripture is very clear in indicating to us that, in the process of transformation, it is necessary to leave behind the merely natural way of thinking and acting, in order to begin to see things from God's perspective and in His light.

Let us listen to an excerpt from the book "Our Transformation in Christ" by the philosopher Dietrich von Hildebrand, who laments that often even Catholic and practicing people lack this readiness to change:

"There are many religious Catholics whose readiness to change is merely a conditional one. They exert themselves to keep the commandments and to get rid of such qualities as they have recognized to be sinful. But they lack the will and the readiness to become new men all in all, to break with all purely natural standards, to view all things in a supernatural light. They prefer to evade the act of metanoia: a true conversion of the heart. Hence with undisturbed consciences they cling to all that appears to them legitimate by natural standards. Their conscience permits them to remain entrenched in their self-assertion. For example, they do not feel the obligation of loving their enemies; they let their pride have its way within certain limits; they insist on the right of giving play to their natural reactions in answer to any humiliation. They maintain as self-evident their claim to the world's respect, they dread being looked upon as fools of Christ; they accord a certain role to human respect, and are anxious to stand justified in the eyes of the world also. They are not ready for a total breach with the world and its standards."

We can realize that here we enter into a more serious dimension of following the Lord, which goes beyond an ordinary pious life in which the need for inner transformation

has not yet been understood. It is possible that some would object, saying that such an intensity in the following of Christ counts, in the first instance, for religious and consecrated souls.

But this is not so!

Of course, those who have left the world for the sake of Christ are particularly committed to this call, because their whole way of life is oriented to this total and unconditional self-giving. But let us remember that St. Paul's letters, in which he speaks of putting off the old self and putting on the new, are addressed to the communities; and therefore, they extend to all Christians in general. This invitation is addressed, then, to everyone who wants to follow the Lord with all their heart.

To conclude, let us summarize today's meditation.

To live an intense following of Christ requires a yearning to become new, to correspond more and more to what the Lord granted us in Baptism.

To do this, we must be willing to allow ourselves to be totally transformed by Him, to shed the old self and to cooperate in this process of transformation.

The inner focus must be totally on God and on wanting to please Him.

If we realize that we do not yet have enough of this longing or even feel like an inner blockage resisting transformation, let us ask the Holy Spirit to grant us the desire to let ourselves be molded by the Lord. We should not be afraid that we might lose something that belongs to our essence, as God has created us. Rather, we will rid ourselves of that which is not part of the image of God in us.

Meditación sobre la lectura del día en el Novus Ordo:
https://en.elijamission.net/the-righteousness-of-god-2/