

with Father Dave Pinto

Fourth Sunday of Lent

God's Affirmation: Prayer of Simplicity

"God answered: I will be with you." And later in Numbers Moses says as the Ark goes before them: "Arise, O Lord, may your enemies be scattered, and may those who hate you flee before you." In this exchange we have a communication between God and Moses. In this first encounter Moses is doubtful of his calling, commissioning, and knowing that God would be with him. In the second exchange, after the relationship between them had grown Moses, could make a 'request' of God and know that God would support him. This soul awareness relationship is called contemplative prayer. Contemplative prayer is a stillness in which one's soul is in continual conversion with God, in which transformation is on-going. This transforming love is the free sharing between two reflective beings. The greater the self-sacrifice of the beings involved, the greater the love. In self-sacrifice is contained transforming power (grace), which is the presence of God.

When one is emersed in God's transforming presence: "...the life of the pray-er, despite the person's sin and failure, doubt and fear, and past mediocre attempts to respond in life to God's love;" is where the grace of God engulfs one's entire being and God takes over the "conversation." This encounter is infused prayer and requires a technique and discipline to achieve. And the achievement is not total or constant and can be attained at times and not on other occasions. The techniques of this prayer or love communication offered by the Christian tradition include: "...meditation, imaginative contemplation, and infused contemplation."

Meditation usually begins or is learned through what is called "discursive meditation." It is where: "...the rational intellect moves more-or-less logically and progressively to reach the kind of knowledge of God, self and the world..." resulting in a commitment of the mind and soul to truth and virtue. A shift occurs when, with no plan, intuition routinely replaces the "conversation" of discursive meditation. This is when prayer achieves a clarity of purpose and communication between God and the pray-er is more: "¹...transparent and simple....Called variously the prayer of simplicity...marked by a still or tranquil abiding in God." (Krupa pg. 66) Routine simplicity in prayer brings the pray-er to a state of infused contemplation. Penetrating directly to the soul, it: "...comes as a direct and undeniable experience of God's presence, a powerful and intense 'loving knowledge'...."

In openness to God, our soul rejoices in His love and seeks to rest in that love. As we come to know God's love and its presence around us, we will seek out ways in our daily routines to be in the realized presence of His love. We will be in a state of continual adoration; as Saint Paul says to pray unceasingly.

¹ "Meaningful Conversations in Contemplative Prayer"—Stephen T. Krupa, S.J. (Human Development; Volume 38; 2018) pp. 64-66.