

Notes October 7, 2016

The Principle and Foundation

This is why the Discernment of Spirits is so important

- so that we can choose according to what helps us (or does not help us) towards the reign of God
- it helps us make a decision

Meditation - Two Standards and Two Value Systems

Meditation places you in some place in history

e.g. Gospels (light v dark, good v evil, etc.)

“Good” easier to image than evil (whatever it touches, it spoils...who/what would that look like?)

How do the practices of Jesus differ from that of evil?

- invites, encourages, rejects violence, etc.

Meditations should bring us to a realization that everything we have is a gift.

...discussion...

“Know your biases” (Fr. Ron)

Dossier - will reveal vulnerabilities and weaknesses

When in Consolation:

can develop pridefulness

need attitude of thankfulness

act with humility

remember, it won't last forever

****HWK: Meditation on Two Standards**

Handout - Rules for Discernment of Spirits

Rule 4 is general description of person in desolation.

Rules 5-9 describe experiences and how we can respond to being in desolation.

Review of Rule 8

- should “work” to be in patience
- know that it is temporary (Consolation will return)
- we are being asked to tolerate, but also to trust
- use Rule 6
 - prayer, etc
 - meditation
 - much examination
 - suitable penance (e.g.prayer, work of charity)

When in Consolation: HUMILITY

When in Desolation: TRUST

Rule 9

Why do we find ourselves in Desolation?

1. tepid, slothful, negligent in prayer
2. to try us (to teach us of our blessings, to call us back to gratitude)
3. to recognize that Consolation is a gift from God, not of our own doing

Consolation Without Previous Cause

- a gift (Draw Me Into Your Friendship by David J. Fleming, SJ, p261)

“God alone can bring about consolation without any concomitant causes. We know the experience of having certain thoughts, achievements, or events which bring about a feeling of great consolation in our lives. We also know the effect of another person or persons whose very presence or conversation can give us joy. But we can more readily attribute our consolation directly to the touch of God when there is no thought, no event, no person - in general, no object of any sort - which seems to be the source of such a movement. The directness of sense words, such as “a touch” or “a taste”, seems to point more accurately the way to describe this special action of God in our lives. The effect of such a taste or touch, which may include peace, delight, or joy, is what we can more readily grasp and speak about. While not ignoring these pleasing effects, we should be aware that God is truly the direct source and center of our consolation moment.”

Desolation, in and of itself, does not produce spiritual growth. We must apply the rules of discernment, and in that resistance and response, growth can occur.

God permits desolation for these purposes:

- to heal us of our faults
- trial (spiritual learning)
- comprehend and appreciate “gift of God’s grace” (times of consolation)

BREAK

Case Study: Bob

****HWK for Friday night: Read Mother Teresa “Dark Night” handout**

****HWK Mediation: Two Standards and Two Value Systems**

SATURDAY

Case: The Dark Night of Mother Teresa

- follow-up discussion -

Teresa knew she was doing what she was called to do (that is a sign of Consolation)

p149 “The feeling of not having any faith” is painful

p149 stayed with what God asked her to do

“keep smiling”

p150 Adoration was bedrock: established during consolation, not to be abandoned in times of desolation

note “feeling like” something and “knowing” it are different

↓
loss of faith

↓
a person who seeks God does have faith

p149 she “converted her feeling of abandonment BY God into an act of abandonment TO God.

Mother Teresa acted on her will and faith, not on how her work made her feel.

We ask people to meditate on Jesus Christ, because our purpose is to help them move closer to Him.

Mother Teresa always “saw Christ” in the people she worked with.

She said “Jesus comes to us in the distressing form of the poor”

p149 "Love is the eye with which we see God, William said; love itself is understanding. But love is not to be confused with mere feelings. Feelings burn out too easily; they can be manipulated or seduced. The love by which we see God must be an act of the will rather than a passing affection of the heart."

NOTE: We see the Ignatian Rules being lived out in Mother Teresa's life.

Be aware of person's perspectives, prayer lives, desires, values.

We should also identify our own values and desires. When we can do that, we can help others identify theirs.

**Trevor will send Tetlow pages 143-146 to all.

Mother Teresa said "We cannot cure them; we ease their pain."

Our "biases" are not only our prejudices, but also our desires.

BREAK

Case Study: Jordan

Case Study: Kathy

LUNCH

Rule 10 Consolation

Gallagher p126

"The tenth: let the one who is in consolation think how he will conduct himself in the desolation which will come after, taking new strength for that time."

Need to lay groundwork for next desolation time.

Time of preparation, thanksgiving

Time to work on patience, think about how you will conduct yourself at next time of desolation

Consolation/Desolation movements always alternate

Time of gaining strength for next desolation

Time of Consolation can be dramatic

p127 "Before spiritual consolation serves any additional purpose, however valuable, such consolation is above all a gift of God to be received with gratitude..."

Appropriate response in a time of grace is gratitude.

Preparation for desolation does not mean that it will be milder or shorter; it means simply that we can be prepared.

Consolation is not a time to become slothful, lazy, prideful, complacent, over-confident, "tepid".

How do we prep for desolation to come?

Think about how we will act when it comes, rather than thinking about the consolation we are in.

Movement from consolation to desolation does not mean an automatic switch of attitudes and actions. Forward planning makes for a smoother transition.

Being prepared puts us in a position of awareness, understanding, and some measure of control.

When in Consolation, it is easier to recognize the spiritual growth that takes place in desolation.

- thanksgiving is appropriate

Time of Consolation helps you to strengthen your resolve not to make changes when in desolation.

Rule 11

Gallagher p138

“The eleventh: let one who is consoled seek to humble himself and lower himself as much as he can, thinking of how little he is capable in the time of desolation without grace or consolation. On the contrary, let one who is in desolation think that he can do much with God’s sufficient grace to resist all his enemies, taking strength in his Creator and Lord.”

Case Study: Jane (Gallagher p144-148)

Dossier is a “springboard” to something bigger - can become too self-centered. Need to remember trust and humility. Keep focused on the goal: union with God.

Consider especially those areas that you prefer not to address. Those should be areas of focus.

Need to know self in order to know God. You will tend to understand God’s mercy more, and will come to know your own biases.

How can you deal with sin if you don’t understand the love and mercy of God?

Jesus wants to bring healing, but it is up to us to allow it.

Can be helpful to meditate on a past experience, and look for God.

BREAK

Case Study: Alicia

****HWK Mediation: Three Phases of Humility**

Write one case study.

Complete Gallagher’s book by reading chapters 12-14