

Becoming the Real Presence

- "You keep them in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you."
Is.26:3
- "You must be made new in mind and spirit and put on the new nature of God's creating" Eph 4:23-24
- "Be Still and Know that I am God"
Ps.46

What is the goal of the Christian Journey?

- Salvation?
- Justification?
- Redemption?
- Righteousness?
- Heaven?
- The Ancient Church had one word that summed up the goal of every Christian and which included all of these concepts while also going beyond them... "Theosis"

“Theosis”

- Becoming as alike to God as it is possible for us as Human Beings to become: Sanctity...transformation of our body, mind, soul and spirit by the Holy Spirit into the likeness of Jesus.
- “For we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He really is...” 1 Jn 3:2
 - Possible because of the Incarnation of Christ:
 - He descended so that we could ascend:
- “Divine Wisdom has assumed humanity and come close to human beings by means of what is closest to us”
 - (St. Augustine of Hippo)

The 2 directions of Theosis:

- Metanoia: An inner re-orientation that is accomplished through a re-ordering of the soul that brings about conversion of heart. Meta (Beyond) Noia (the Mind)
- Photismos: Illumination/enlightenment: the inner dawning of the light of the Holy Spirit. Growth in awareness of the presence of God at the heart of our being.
- Both of these processes are facilitated by the practice of meditative contemplative prayer.

The two paths of prayer

- Kataphatic: The way of attribution
 - Making positive statements about who and what God is.
 - Images
 - Devotional prayer (active)
 - Fullness (Yesh)
- Apophatic: The way of negation
 - Describing God by what God is not.
 - Image-less
 - Contemplative prayer (passive)
 - Emptiness (Ayin)
- Both forms affirm God is unknowable in God's essence
- Liturgy: The place where Kataphatic and Apophatic dance.

The Cross: The sacred Junction of time and eternity:

- Why the Cross?
- Unites the vertical (eternal Kairos) with the horizontal (time chronos)
- Chronos is pierced by Kairos in the pierced heart of Christ.
- Making the Sign of the Cross!

The Exodus Revelation:

- The translation of the name is dynamic:
- God is revealed as Amness, I Am
- Yod, Heh, Waw, Heh
- I Am who Am
- Now...
- The Present Moment becomes that place of encounter: The Burning Bush...

Intention: Practices of Consecration

- Intention seeks to encounter the noetic centre of the soul (the heart) in its sacredness as the temple of the Holy Spirit and strives to live from this centre.
- Distraction and temptation will pull us from this fundamental intention again and again
- Our practices along this line seek to strengthen our intention so as to live more and more freely according to the mind of Christ and to open more fully to Divine Grace.
- To Consecrate: To Make Sacred or to become aware of the sacredness within.

St. Teresa: Intention and Return

- Time is consecrated to prayer and attention is given
- As often as the distraction is noted the return happens
- This distraction/return is part of the meditative process and strengthens the faculty of attention.

The Practice:

- All thoughts and images of God and His attributes must be forgotten.
- Cultivate a “naked intent directed unto God.”
- Suggestion of “the Word” = mantra to focus on interior attention.
- Parallel process of Kenosis and Plerosis
- Mary & Martha

Aids to Attention: the Sacramental present moment.

- There is a holiness to the moment at hand. So it comes down to taking care of the moment. You respond to the need of the moment as keenly as possible.
- Keep in mind three things: There is God, you and the moment.
- Every moment is like a gift.
- Relax, get into the moment and do all that you can to listen to it. I mean really, really listen.
- Be present to the moment with everything you are.
- It takes practice.

“Yes, that reminds me of the time a few years ago when I was washing our dinner dishes in the kitchen and you called out, “Steve where are you?” And I replied, “I’m in the kitchen.” Then you said, “No, try again.” So I said, “I’m in your house.” And you answered, “Sorry – one more try.” And I said, “I’m on Patmos,” and for the third time I was wrong. And then you walked over to the kitchen and told me, “That you and I and all things are forever in the presence of God.”

Robert Lax

Steve Georgiou

The Way of the Dreamcatcher

What is Mindfulness?

the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose in the present moment, with compassion & open-hearted curiosity.

*Professor Mark Williams,
Oxford University*

Getting the “lingo” right:

- Prayer: Our dialogue with God and a transformative experience whereby the Holy Spirit in Christ, present in our souls cries out to the Father and slowly changes us into the likeness of Jesus. (Theosis)
- Meditation: A form of prayer; which may be discursive whereby our imagination & intellect is active to assist us in understanding elements of the faith; such as when we meditate upon the mysteries of the Rosary or on passages of Sacred Scripture or a teaching of the Faith.
- Meditation may also be passive, which means simply resting in deep awareness of the presence of God. St. Teresa refers to this as the prayer of quiet or calm abiding.

- Contemplation: Is the goal of all prayer and means a state of being that is a gift to us from God whereby the person enters into deep stillness and silence of body, mind, and soul and where God acts in the person's being in a transformative way.
- Mindfulness is simply a human quality of awareness of the present moment. Any human being of any faith or none may practice this but the Fathers of the Church, St. Benedict and St. Francis taught this was necessary to establish as part of our prayer discipline so as to prepare the person for deep meditative prayer and contemplation.
- Originally this was known as the art of attention or in Greek, Prosekai... in this sense Mindfulness is an essential part of the Christian Prayer tradition and always was. There is nothing New about Christian Mindfulness

Mindfulness as prayer:

The Sacrament of the Present Moment

- This is living every moment deliberately in the presence of God.
- Mindfulness can lead us to a deeper and more authentic prayer life
- Every act becomes a prayer and a sense of holiness is maintained throughout the day
- Meditation as prayer gives us a contemplative vision – we experience God's love, peace, joy, abundance
- We move from 'My prayer to Prayer of the Trinity' (Freeman)

Lectio Divina as a Mindful Discipline

- The relaxation stage
- The hearing of the Word
- The repetition of the Word (Chewing the Cud)
- Awareness of the Word (The harp of the heart)
- The Versiculum
- Resting in the Word
- Acting on the Word
- "You keep them in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you" Is: 26:3
- "Be Still and Know" Ps:45

The “prayer of the Desert”

- The Arrow Prayers (Preserving Intention)
- The Versiculum (Preserving Attention)
- Liturgy / Psalmody / Lectio / Eldership
- Purpose: To keep the Monastic aware of the presence of God and to slowly tame the desiring mind
- Combined with fasting, watching, bodily postures

Christian meditation: methods

- Jesus Prayer
- Silent Eucharistic Adoration
- Focus on an object such as a candle or Icon and be aware of the love of God.
- The Rosary (to remember or forget)
- The Christian Mantra
- The “Versiculum”
- eg Maranatha (Maine)
- Lectio Divina
- Imagination and visualisation
 - Imagine yourself in a peaceful scene
 - Put yourself in a scene from the Gospels
 - Imagine yourself with Jesus
 - Imagine yourself with God or one of the saints

The practice of Christian meditation: Suggested method

- Sit still in silence with back straight but relaxed
- Say prayer word with the breath.
- Listen to the word and do not think or image anything
- Return to the word if distractions come
- Persevere morning and evening (20 minutes for adults)

5 kinds of thought encountered

- Imaginal (Wool gathering)
- Emotionally active
- Insights & Breakthroughs
- Self Reflection on the Practice
- Interior Purification
- Always the remedy is to return to the Word and to the Breath
- Abbot Thomas Keating

“Theosis: The work of the desert”

The practice of the Desert: Askesis

- A Holistic Path of Transformation
 - Solitude / Eldership
 - Fasting
 - Bodily forms of prayer
 - The Art of Attention (Prosekai/Nepsis)
Mindfulness
 - Scriptures (Lectio Divina)
 - Meditation
- We must have the courage to face what will emerge from the Self: the “demons” : Logisimoi
- To begin to reckon with the things that emerge.
- Eldership: The uncovering of the thoughts.
(Insight)

Compassion: God as Mercy

- The fruit of the contemplative path is a Mindfulness of the heart that leads to Compassion:
- Cum-Passio: To suffer (feel with)
- Rachwum: The love and closeness a mother has for her unborn child.
- Hessed: Loving kindness (Outreach)
- Eleos: Deliverance from Judgement (Mestos Eleos St. James)
- Splagchon: Empathy/suffering with

The teaching of Jesus

- "Be Compassionate (merciful) as your Heavenly Father is Compassionate." Lk 6:36
- Direct command of Christ and definition of the nature of God.
- Compassion/Mercy is an essential characteristic of God Himself. All divine activity is compassionate.
- "The Lord is Compassion (Mercy) and Love." (Psalm 102)

The Compassion of Service

A Call to Engagement:

- Recognition of same-ness
 - Leads to recognition of all suffering
 - Leads to desire to free the suffering
 - Leads to action.
 - Not just a feeling...
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- Open our hands as we open our hearts

Compassion Practices:

- Empathy through Compunction
- Fundamental Orientation to the good of the other.
- Works of Mercy
- Kenosis
- Adoration
- Love as Agape