

Twenty-Third Week of Ordinary Time
September 8, 2024
Year of the Most Holy Eucharist
Reflection #37

“For the Christian — not only for the contemplative, but for every Christian — the purpose of life is union with Christ.” (Dom Hubert van Zeller, How to find God, p.3)

The goal and purpose of our life is union with God. This union began at our Baptism. We are encouraged to remain in this union through the avoidance of sin. We strive to not commit mortal sin (sin which destroys our relationship with God) and avoid the nearest occasions of venial sin (sin which weakens our relationship with God). The Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Jesus, who is God, provides us with the needed grace (when received worthily) to remain in a right relationship with God. All of these statements being true, we must now consider IF we are willing to direct our lives toward this relationship (union with God) as our primary focus? In essence, is my desire for eternal union with God (Heaven) the primary reason I choose to live the way I am currently living?

I confess to all of you; I struggle with answering this question for myself. I found, through my actions alone, a lukewarm answer. Some days I desire to live a life worthy of my heavenly calling. On other days, I flounder just trying to avoid sinful thoughts or words. If I have trouble staying focused upon Heaven as my goal, then what words could I offer to assist you toward Heaven as your goal?

How does one inspire another to live their lives as Christ taught by loving God and neighbor and, in doing so, remain in union with God in this life and stay united with Him eternally in Heaven? As we spoke of prior, unless this desire for union remains fresh in our hearts, we could, potentially, find ourselves falling away from God thus losing this eternal relationship. How can we see holiness/sanctity fostered and developed in our spiritual lives?

We must first begin by acknowledging our need for this relationship with God. We should daily say: “I am weak and I need God.” I need God to provide me with the grace to sustain me as I attempt to remain in union with Him. The fact that you are in church this weekend already provides you an opportunity to grow your relationship with God. My family, just as some adolescents struggle as they move into adulthood, so too, there are those “adolescents” in the Christian faith who may never reach a level of “maturity” in their knowledge and love of God. It is not because of a physical, mental or emotional defect found within them. It IS because they chose to not make their relationship with God a priority. Thus, we can say: there are some people whose spiritual lives are “stunted.” The great oak of eternal union with God is found to exist as a bonsai, prevented from reaching its fullest potential.

Our spiritual progress of union with God is further fostered by our attendance. I commend you for being here. However, this is only the first step. This union with God is dependent upon our responding to His call. He calls us to a life of holiness which motivates us toward remaining in union with Him. The same God who spoke of holiness to the Apostles continues to speak to us concerning holiness. The holiness He calls us toward is not overly weighed down by numerous rules, regulations or instructions. It is, as Deacon Bullock often reminds us, all about Love. Holiness is to love God and neighbor above all. We must choose to see this as our daily duty. We must reduce everything in our lives to this most basic principle of Love. It will require us to orient our lives toward God and abandon ourselves into His Divine Will. For this next week, I would like you to do one thing. I ask, please, that when you awake in the morning, offer yourself, everything and everyone you will encounter to God. Ask for the prayerful intercession of Saint Joseph, foster father of Jesus and the Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary to assist you in this. Honestly, if Saint Joseph and Blessed Mother Mary were fully capable to care for God, the babe Jesus, then I think they can equally care for and intercede for you and I.