

Being At Home in God

The Foundation for All Homes, Faith Communities, and Civic Communities

A Reflection by David Keller 10/18/2010

Attitude

*“Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart
and you shall find rest for your souls.”
(Jesus in Matthew 11:29)*

Jesus teaches that the primary foundation for prayer is humility “deeply rooted in the very heart” (Dorotheus of Gaza). It is our attitude which makes prayer possible...a looking away from ourselves.

“The person who is willing to die to self, is the person who will find life and his or her true self”

The heart is the seat of our being. It is the place where each of us truly lives...the place where we are truly ourselves. The heart is also the place where God dwells within us. A soft and flexible heart can expand and make space for the One who is already there. The heart is the seat of our will and our desire. It yearns to become one with the desires of God. A humble heart is a heart which knows itself as a creature of God and responds in wonder and gratitude. A flexible heart makes room for love.

In the eighth chapter of John’s gospel Jesus observes that those who want to discredit him do so **“because there is no room in your hearts for my word.”**

Our attitude makes personal prayer possible. The flexibility of our heart opens our heart to become one with the heart of God. This is a **gradual** life-long process and it makes it possible for us to become **rooted in God**. The relationship between our prayer and the activities and responsibilities of daily life is most profound when we allow ourselves to be rooted in God. The attitude we take on in our life with God becomes the attitude we have in relation to the world and to our human relationships. The openness of our heart in relation to God becomes the openness of our heart in daily life. Our attitude toward to God becomes our attitude toward all of life. The inner environment of our life with God forms the environment in which we embrace the world and other people. The environment we create in our relationships with others and in our work will reflect the nature of our inner life with God. What does our outer, personal environment say to other people? Our stewardship of the earth and its resources is a window revealing the inner environment of our life with God, as individuals and as a

society. What does our inner attitude toward God contribute to the formation of life in our homes, faith communities, and civic life?

Being Rooted in God Leads to Our True Home

Contemplative prayer is important because it keeps us rooted in God, which is the only way to embrace living fully in the world.

“Meditation is a practice that enables us each day to root our lives in the spiritual reality of God. It is a positive way, even though our current materialistic and outer-directed values may dismiss it as a waste of time or as unproductive introversion. Yet in meditation we do not reject the world or construct any false opposition to it. We wish to live fully in the world but we know we can only arrive at that fullness and wholeheartedness if we are truly rooted in God.” (John Main in *Word Made Flesh*)

Being rooted in God has been called “listening with the ear of the heart”. Saint Benedict knew that if we cannot hear the word of God within ourselves and in sacred scripture we will never be able to hear that same voice in the hard work and challenges of daily life. Benedict knew that being rooted in God is a matter of life and death, literally, for ourselves, and for those around us. In the third century in the solitude of the Egyptian desert Antony of Egypt discovered how difficult it is to be rooted in God. We must look clearly at the false self we create and the myriad of ways we can degrade our lives through worldly and self-serving values. Contemplation guides us through soil which is dry and lifeless to rich and moist soil, bathed by the aquifer of God’s inner presence. Abba Antony said:

Whoever sits in solitude and is quiet has escaped from three wars: those of hearing, speaking, and seeing. Then there is only one war left in which to fight, and that is the battle for your own heart.

The Sayings of the Fathers

Finding our True Home

Contemplative prayer and the routines and responsibilities of daily life are not competitors. We do not escape from life to pray. Prayer is manifest in all we do.

There are many voices speaking in the world today. Which words will we heed? Which words will be the springboard of our action and the source of our

vision? In a world of many voices and values our loyalty can be scattered. Our vision can be blurred amidst competition for our hearts.

Jesus invites us to...

"...make my word your home..."

and to base our actions and words on...

"...what we have seen with the Abba, the Holy One..."

When we have made Jesus' word (The Word) our **home** and taken time to see the world with God's vision, our actions and words will not be scattered. We will know the Truth and truth will give us freedom. This freedom will not take us away from the world or from ourselves, but rather, will enable us to know what is fundamental and life-giving, just and responsible, caring and generative in the world.

Contemplative prayer leads us across a threshold to a place where we can make the words, the mind, and the consciousness of Jesus our home. That home is not a haven from the world. It is a placeless place where we are accepted, loved and formed for our constant re-crossings of the threshold between contemplation and action. This journey into Christ, each day as we meditate, forms us with the qualities we need for the journey toward being fully and authentically human. These qualities are :

Humility...
Purity of Heart...
Charity...
Love of neighbor...
Fidelity...
Courage...
Perseverance...
A willingness to be led...
Trust.

Being at home in Jesus' word, the one who is the Word, will help us know our true selves rather than the self we try to create or the self we have allowed the world around us, with its endless expectations for achievement and reputation, to create. To live in the word of Jesus means to live authentically rather than seek perfection by the world's or the church's standards.

To see the world and ourselves from the perspective of God assumes cognitive and spiritual knowledge (experience of God) that is shared in union with God. This experience of God is the womb of compassion and action. To dwell in the Word means to pay attention to our only source of true knowledge

and vitality. From this ecstatic place within us flows our active self. This true self, like Jesus, is sent from God and has its source of truth and power in God. Jesus said: **“Out of the heart, the mouth speaks.”**

Our ecstasy, while often perceived as a competitor of ordinary, daily living, is in fact the **source** of our daily life. *Ecstasy is our experience of the wonder and delight of God’s presence in ordinary things.* Our actions, while **seeming** to interrupt our ecstasy, are actually manifestations of ecstasy. This means that we are called to faithfulness and authenticity even when they involve suffering, pain, rejection and failure according to the world’s standards.

The important issue or goal is not success or completion of expectations. The issue is **faithfulness** to what is true, regardless of the outcome. This is abundant life.

When we fill the words and structures of our homes with the reality of God’s presence in our lives we will experience abundant life, regardless of material possessions or economic stability. Words and structures without God’s presence are not enough. We are called to **become** what we proclaim and desire for others.

Our homes, marriages, families, faith communities, and closest relationships will be authentic if they manifest the image of God. (How will they keep us rooted in God, our true home?) When we are intentional about our relationship with God we will manifest the image of God. Our daily lives will manifest our true home. This requires a letting go of control. When all our fundamental relationships, especially our home life, are freed from the bondage of the unrestrained ego we will experience the lifting of a veil that has blinded us from seeing the sacredness of our lives and the lives of other people. When that happens, our vision and the possibilities for all the venues of our lives will be transformed.