

LC RETREAT MARCH 2017
LIVING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

**REFLECTION 3 –
ANGER & RESENTMENT**

“The lostness of the older son was much harder to identify. After all, he did all the right things. He was obedient, dutiful, law-abiding, and hard working. People respected him, admired him, praised him, and likely considered him a model son. Outwardly, the elder son was faultless. But when confronted by his father’s joy at the return of his younger brother, a dark power erupts in him and boils to the surface. Suddenly, there becomes glaringly visible a resentful, proud, unkind, selfish person, one that had remained deeply hidden...”(The Return of the Prodigal Son p 71)

The Simple Path

- “The soul which receives the gift of self-knowledge and sees the hardness of its own heart arrives at a moment of decision: It either accepts the gift or remains in darkness.”(p 44)
- Message #38 p. 128
My daughter, a hardened heart is not able to receive the grace of God. It is not able to see the glory of God revealed before him. I, God Incarnate, was in their midst yet they were blind. My Heart was grieved to see the condition of their hearts... The act of Mary Magdalene and Peter, in which they come to Me with tears of sorrow, is necessary to pierce the hardness of the human heart steeped in sin.

Eyes Have Not Seen nor Ears Heard. 11.

- *Eyes have not seen, nor ears heard what your God has prepared for you. I invite you to come and see. I will remove the veil that covers the eyes of your soul so that you can see what few are able to see. You will see the new Jerusalem in all her glory. She, more precious than gold or diamonds, will be yours to possess. Allow Me (This is important because we can block this work of the Spirit) to remove the plank from your eyes that keeps you from contemplating the glory of God before you.// Come, My daughter, and bring many to the foot of the Cross. Prostrate yourselves before the foot of My Cross and kiss holy ground. Rise and embrace My precious feet, and kiss My wounded feet. It is here, through this gesture of humility and love that the plank of pride and self-love is removed from blinding your sight. Touch My feet, bless My feet with your kisses and cleanse them with your tears. The Holy Spirit drew Mary Magdalene to this act of love in*

preparation for My crucifixion, and it is My Mother who completed this act of love and reparation at My crucifixion. It is here at My precious feet that you receive the gold of precious repentance. I desire for you to bring My sons to the foot of My Cross. (11/16/10) (p.46-47 or 49)

“There is so much resentment among the “just” and the “righteous.” There is so much judgement, condemnation, and prejudice among the “saints”. There is so much frozen anger among the people who are so concerned about avoiding sin.”(RTPS, p71)

ANGER

“Frozen anger” –I have dealt with frozen anger in my own life and I have seen in many souls I have walked intimately with in the Path of the Cross. This anger has been hidden deeply within us, buried deep in our hearts. Why have we buried our anger, kept it so hidden within ourselves?

- We were taught that anger is BAD, a sinful emotion. As children we were not allowed to show or express our anger, especially if one or both of our parents were authoritarian and extremely strict.
- FEAR kept our anger buried.
- If either one of our parents, grandparents, mother-in-law, father-in-law, bishop, friend... wounded us deeply, and we kept silent, chances are that we have frozen anger.
- “lost our voice” – unable to defend ourselves, and no one else defended us.
- This anger is like the boiling lava in a volcano.
- This silent anger keeps our hearts very hardened, a resentful heart, unable to experience true joy.
- This buried, hidden, anger must come out; must be given to Jesus.
- This is also necessary for the purification of our hearts. This is also the work of The Path. I have had people tell me that they never get angry nor feel anger, or on the other hand, people that find themselves constantly in bursts of anger.
- This type of anger is associated with our wounds. It is the “puss” of the wound; an infection we have allowed to grow and spread because of fear of touching the deep pain of our wound; fear of the hidden anger we have towards a certain person.
- If we allow the anger to be released we will discover the “pure pain” underneath. Usually the deep pain of the wound.
- In order to become a victim of love we MUST discover this anger within us and release it to Jesus. He waits with His arms wide open to receive it. This

frozen anger, many times even unknown to us, serves as a thick barrier that keeps us separated from the love of God and prevents us from loving unconditionally.

Understanding Anger

www.catholiceducation.org/en/marriage-and-family/parenting/anger-and-virtue.html

As a passion, anger itself is neither good nor evil (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1767).

- “But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment.” Mt5:22
- “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You traverse sea and land to make one convert, and when that happens you make him a child of Gehenna twice as much as yourselves.” Mt23:15

Sinful Anger

According to Aquinas, anger is sinful when:

1. we are angry over the wrong things – over things that are not unjust.
2. In our motives. When someone hurts or upsets us, we might be driven by a vindictive attitude, which wants to see that person suffer. We might hope their wrongdoing will be exposed – not for their own good, but merely because we want to see their demise. we do not care so much about the soul of the person who hurt us.
3. it is too fierce. we can be too severe internally in our thoughts. for example, when we hold a grudge, have too great a displeasure toward someone, or secretly wish that person harm. anger also can manifest itself externally in the way we act toward a person who upset us – if, for example, we respond in a fury over a small matter, if we punish a child too severely, or if we purposefully neglect basic courtesy toward the person who hurt us.

This sinful anger, that we all know very well, can help us find the resentful son in us. This kind of anger is a disorder in us and we must look at it. (a dark power erupts in him and boils to the surface. Suddenly, there becomes glaringly visible a resentful, proud, unkind, selfish person, one that had remained deeply hidden...) We must glare at ourselves and ask, “Where did this come from? Why am I so angry? What just happened to me?...”

- Ex. – This kind of sinful anger is what I was confronted with when I began homeschooling.

Just Anger, Virtuous Anger

- Anger can be noble if it is directed toward maintaining justice and correcting vice (Catechism, no. 2302). One can think of anger as a passionate desire to set things right in the face of a perceived evil... If Jesus did not truly love the Pharisees, He would not warn them of the eternal punishment toward which they are heading. Jesus' anger is thus rooted in love – in desiring what is best for them – as He intends this clear warning to lead them to repentance. Being angry about the right things and in the right way is virtuous.
- But avoiding anger at all times may be a sign of weakness. St. Thomas Aquinas notes how it is a vice not to get angry over things one should. He calls it **"unreasonable patience."**
- Ex. – my recent experience with an unjust situation. My anger served as an indicator that something was really wrong.
 - I had to submit my anger to Christ, asking, “Is this anger just my Lord? If so, what is your will? What do you want me to do?”
 - **“Dissect”** my anger. I had to separate any resentment and frustration and remain only with the PAIN of the injustice; the pain of the darkness in others...
 - Then I could confront the situation in the Spirit by bringing it to the light with love, desiring only the good of all those involved.
- The emotion of anger is so intense, that when submitted to Christ, the Holy Spirit can use it to bring us to action.
 - Ex.- Hector was so angry because a family friend was attacking the Blessed Mother harshly. His just anger moved him to defend his Mother with zeal. This is holy anger. The just anger moved him to act with courage and intensity, yet he thought he fell into sin because he was angry.
 - We need to bring our sinful anger to the light of Christ SO THAT we can become WARRIORS for God. Without just anger we cannot fight, our men cannot defend and protect. See how the Holy Spirit moves Jesus to act in His just anger.
 - Padre Pio (<http://infallible-catholic.blogspot.com/2012/04/life-and-miracles-of-padre-pio.html>)
 - ✓ Padre Pio demanded that each confession be a true conversion. He did not tolerate a lack of honesty in the confession of sins. He was very stern on those who made excuses, spoke insincerely, or lacked a firm resolution to amend their lives. He demanded frankness and

total honesty from the penitent. He also required a true and sincere sorrow of heart, and an absolute firmness in a person's resolutions for the future. If the penitent was not honest, or just read through the list of his or her sins without the firm resolution to change, Padre Pio would often growl, "Get out!".

- ✓ A man once went to St. Giovanni Rotondo to confess to Padre Pio. It was between 1954 and 1955. When he finished the accusation of his sins Padre Pio said: "Do you have anything else to confess?" and he said, "No Father!" He repeated the question: "Do you have anything else to confess?" "No Father!" For a third time Padre Pio asked him: "Do you have anything else to confess? At this third negative answer the hurricane exploded. With the voice of the Holy Spirit Padre Pio howled: "Go away! Go away! Because you are not reformed of your sins!"

Purification of our Resentful Hearts

"The lostness of the resentful "saint" is so hard to reach precisely because it is so closely wedded to the desire to be good and virtuous. (The Return of the Prodigal Son, p. 71)

"My resentment is not something that can be easily distinguished and dealt with rationally. It is far more pernicious: something that has attached itself to the underside of my virtue." (p 75)

The Simple Path 4-A & 4-B

"Once the self-rejecting complaint has formed in us, we lose our spontaneity(playfulness) to the extent that even joy can no longer invoke joy in us. The story says: "Calling one of the servants, he asked what it was all about?" There is the fear that I am excluded again, that someone didn't tell me what was going on, that I was kept out of things. The complaint resurges immediately: Why was I not informed, what is this all about?" The unsuspecting servant, full of excitement and eager to share the good news, explains: "Your brother has come and your father has killed the calf we had been fattening because he has got him back safe and sound." But this shout of joy cannot be received. Instead of relief and gratitude, the servant's joy summons up the opposite: "He was angry then and refused to go in." **JOY AND RESENTMENT CAN NOT COEXIST.** The music and dancing, instead of inviting to joy, become a cause for even greater withdrawal. " (TRPS, p. 73)

After pondering again Henri Nouwen's book, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, I realized that there is another person that is not mentioned in the Gospel accounts, nor seen in the painting of Rembrandt, that has impacted my life – Fr Henri Nouwen. Through this book, I have journeyed personally with him and he with me. Without even realizing it, I found myself praying to this friend, brother, father, to help me as I continue to journey through the narrow path. I have come to love this man that I never knew personally. How? Fr Nouwen exposed himself completely to God and to himself, but also to me. He made himself completely vulnerable. He is one of those few souls, who I feel, persevered in the narrow path of the Cross till his last breath on earth. He is one of the few that allowed himself to be found by God. He had the desire and courage to allow the Holy Spirit to take him where it was most difficult. As he grew in trust of Abba through Christ, he allowed the Holy Spirit to bring light into his most hidden darkness. He looked at his resentful heart continuously, daily, acknowledging his hidden lies that constantly moved him to make comparisons, judgments of others and self, to complaining, murmuring, jealousies, and self-condemnations. He had to deny his constant desires to be affirmed, looked at, wanted, approved, liked and praised. This is what it means to persevere in the narrow path of the cross, a journey of life. As I struggled and walked with Fr Nouwen, because all his experiences he wrote about were also mine, he, in a most subtle way, became a sort of spiritual father to me—a father that I felt embraced me as one with the Father.

He is a soul that allowed the Spirit to make himself completely **TRANSPARENT** to God and to himself. He lived, as Christ has taught us in the Simple Path, “wrapped in the gift of self-knowledge.” He worked tirelessly to keep nothing hidden from God, to expose constantly the lies interwoven into his very self, his inner core. He allowed the Spirit to find the younger brother and older brother hidden in his inner child, in the dark locked room in his heart.

Through the years since the foundation of Love Crucified, I have had the honor of journeying alongside women and men, many of whom are in our community. It is always an awe-inspiring experience to witness souls who allow me to enter with them into their hidden resentful hearts and expose their darkness to the Light of Love; such transparency, such courage, such zeal, such innocence, such love has been the gaze of Abba strengthening and encouraging me to not be afraid and to come to Him. I have also had the experience of profound grief to witness souls who deny the Holy Spirit the right to enter their hidden resentful hearts, to expose the “fake saint”, to expose the lies, who make the decision to remain in their false identities and choose to journey on another path. And I, as I look into the gaze of my Abba through the gaze of Christ, learn to also wait, trust and choose love even when

it is most difficult and impossible for me because faith moves me to believe that nothing is impossible for God!

We are each in Rembrandt's painting and the Gospel narrative. We must find ourselves in the younger brother, the older brother, and finally in the Father. We can only enter into the Father as we journey in complete abandonment and trust with the Holy Spirit to find ourselves in the other persons. This is the journey of The Simple Path God has been leading us through. Our mission to bring God victim souls, to help others journey this narrow path to transformation into the Father, can only be through our commitment to persevere daily living and suffering in the path of the Cross. Fr Henri Nouwen didn't journey with me with Gospel concepts, nor theological and intellectual thoughts, but with his tears, sweat and blood united to Christ's. This too is how we are called to fulfill our mission.

"Here, I am faced with my own true poverty. I am totally unable to root out my resentments. They are so deeply anchored in the soil of my inner self that pulling them out seems like self- destruction. How to weed out these resentments without uprooting the virtues as well? "

Can the elder son in me come home? Can I be found as the younger son was found? How can I return when I am lost in resentment, when I am caught in jealousy, when I am imprisoned in obedience and duty lived out as slavery? It is clear, that alone, by myself, I cannot find myself. More daunting than healing myself as the younger son is healing myself as the elder son. Confronted here with the impossibility of self-redemption, I now understand Jesus' words to Nicodemus: "Do not be surprised when I say: 'You must be born from above.'" Indeed, something has to happen that I myself cannot cause to happen. I cannot be reborn from below; that is, with my own strength, with my own mind, with my own psychological insights... I can only be healed from above, from where God reaches down. What is impossible for me is possible for God. "With God everything is possible." (p76)

Reflection:

Open our hearts to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to reveal to us our frozen anger. Think of the people in our lives that we still struggle to love, those that have wounded us deeply, and ask, "do I have buried hidden anger? "

Do I gaze at my anger? Think of the last time you were angry and dissect your anger. Was it sinful, just and what did I do with that anger?

Where is the resentment in my heart?

Have I recovered my spontaneity and playfulness? If not, why?

Am I a joyful person or do I find myself mostly melancholy?