

1st Nail of Our Interior Crucifixion:

Purification of our DesiresLC Encounter 2020 – 4th Reflection**Growing in the Likeness and Image of God as MC and MOC –Part I****We must be anchored in knowing: Who we are, our mission, and where we are going.**

By going to the beginning, to Genesis, we understand who we are as the image and likeness of God and what His Will is for us.

In his apostolic letter, [*The Dignity and Vocation of Women*](#), St. John Paul II gives us much insight into our identity as men and women created to become whole through our relationships with God and one another.

“In his goodness and wisdom, God chose to reveal himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of his will (cf. Eph 1: 9) by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man has access to the Father in the Holy Spirit and comes to share in the divine nature (cf. Eph 2:18; 2 Pt 1:4)”¹

The dignity of every human being and the vocation corresponding to that dignity find their definitive measure in union with God. Mary, the woman of the Bible, is the most complete expression of this dignity and vocation. #5

We read that man cannot exist "alone" (cf. Gen 2:18); he can exist only as a "unity of the two", and therefore in relation to another human person. It is a question here of a mutual relationship: man to woman and woman to man. **Being a person in the image and likeness of God thus also involves existing in a relationship**, in relation to the other "I". This is a prelude to the definitive self-revelation of the Triune God: a living unity in the communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. #7

To discover and live our dignity as men and women transformed in God's image, we need to enter a profound union with God and authentic relationships with men and women. This is why, in *The Simple Path to Union with God*, our Lord teaches us to examine our relationships. The formation of *The Simple Path* is not a spirituality in the clouds. It enters the nitty-gritty of relationships so that we can be transformed into the image and likeness of God.

Tenderness Through Our Hands —Diary of a MOC. Path p.294

The love of God will stretch your love beyond your physical capacities. The expansion of the tent of your hearts is a most painful process. You have to choose to love those most difficult to love. You must always choose love, patience, and tenderness and never give in to anger and resentment.

The tenderness of God was manifested through My hands. The healing grace of God was transmitted through My hands. I need you to be My hands and to transmit the healing grace of God to your spouses, children, and many. It is My tenderness that heals the harshness and hardness of hearts. Radiate My tenderness through your hands. (3/1/11)

¹ II Vatican Council, [Dei Verbum #2](#)

My Holy Remnant Will Pierce the Darkness —Diary of a MOC. Path p.341

I came into the world to suffer and to die. I came into the world for the Cross... See the oppression and darkness in your family as the same darkness in the world and in My Church... This darkness also oppresses My Heart, and I continue to suffer. My daughter, God the Father, intended, from the beginning of time, for My Body (the Church) to be united to its Head to pierce this darkness. It will be My holy remnant in My Church that, united in My Cross, will pierce the darkness. My daughter, you must choose to love always. In your family, love through your silence, love through your gentleness, love in kindness, love in patience, persevere in love. (11/29/10)

The Lord's words above, found in *The Simple Path*, correlate the darkness in the world and the darkness in the men and women we are in relationships with. Within our family, circle of friends, and coworkers, we can encounter oppressions of pornography, alcoholism, drug addiction, loss of faith, indifference to Jesus in the Eucharist, etc. We are also confronted with darkness in the priesthood through our relationships with them. We can experience, as Ezekiel describes, their "dry bones." The Lord tells us, "Go there, to your family members, friends, and coworkers and receive their oppression with Me as the way to love." In this way, we love them, united with Jesus, and pierce the darkness.

We are Purified Through Situations and Persons —Diary of a MOC. Path, P. 171

Ponder every relationship and situation in your lives where you are not loving with Me, through Me, and in Me. Ask yourselves, "Why is it so difficult to love this person or to love in these situations?" It is precisely in those situations and with those persons where you need to be purified. It is only in this way that you can become ONE with My Eucharistic life and be transformed into Love. My pure victims of love are God's warriors for these decisive times. (9/1/14)

The Lord teaches us how to live difficult relationships.

He taught us through *The Simple Path* to **receive** the piercings of their oppression in our hearts just as Christ receives our oppression. Then we need to **process** our resentments, anger, disappointments, and fears with the Holy Spirit and keep the **PURE PAIN** to suffer as UNO with Him. Pure pain is that which is no longer contaminated with sins (anger, resentment, etc.).

Only through the difficult people in our lives can we be restored as men and women in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, they are God's gift to us, His opportunity to expand our hearts and help us be purified. Without the difficult people in our lives, we cannot become saints. Therefore, let us stop and thank God for each difficult person He has blessed us with!

St John Paul II continues:

The New Testament will reveal the inscrutable mystery of God's inner life. God, who allows himself to be known by human beings through Christ, is the unity of the Trinity: unity in communion. In this way, new light is also thrown on man's image and likeness to God, spoken of in the Book of Genesis. The fact that man "created as man and woman" is the image of God means not only that each of them individually is like God, as a rational and free being. It also means that man and woman, created as a "unity of the two" in their common humanity, are called to live in a communion of love and, in this way, to mirror in the world the communion of love that is in God, through which the Three Persons love each other in the intimate mystery of the one divine life. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God through the unity of the divinity, exist as persons through the inscrutable divine relationship. Only in this

way can we understand the truth that God in himself is love (cf. 1 Jn 4:16). #7

In the "unity of the two," man and woman are called from the beginning not only to exist "side by side" or "together," but they are also called to exist mutually "one for the other." This also explains the meaning of the "help" spoken of in Genesis 2:18-25: **"I will make him a helper fit for him."** #7.

The new evangelization, as an authentic witness of God who is Love, can only come about through the new men and women, the "new Adams" and "new Eves." Jesus taught us:

...What is required to evangelize? To come to know Love; to hear, see and touch Love: to receive the embrace of our Father through Me, with Me, and in Me. The Evangelizer is the Holy Spirit, the love of the Father and the Son. It is the power of the Holy Spirit who witnesses the love of the Father through the Son. Without the Holy Spirit, there can be no evangelization. The world is being prepared for the new Evangelization: men, women, and children consumed in the fire of the Holy Spirit through My Cross. New men and new women are required for the New Evangelization. This is why I plead with the thirst of God for victim souls, for it is only My victim souls that abandon themselves completely to Me that can be made a new creation in the image and likeness of God. 12/17/14

Community: a communion of love with God and one another

God desires this communion between men and women, not only in our families but also in our communities. God established the Love Crucified Community from the beginning with both men and women, the Mothers of the Cross and Missionaries of the Cross. As a community, we must strive for unity in God, through Christ, with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the purpose of a Christian community is not just to acquire knowledge and information; it is a communion of persons giving themselves to each other and loving each other. By living in this way, we grow in each other's hearts and enrich one another.

In communities, including religious congregations, communion can be difficult, just like in families, due to the complexity of relationships and personal wounds. Only when we are willing to work through difficult relationships by seeing what must be purified in our hearts can the communion of the love of the Most Holy Trinity triumph in our communities and families.

St. John Paul II, in the above letter, teaches that "Man and woman are called to exist 'One for the other.'" This is how Jesus lived, as a Victim of Love. Jesus did not just live amongst His people "side by side"; He poured Himself out as a gift of self.

Living *The Simple Path* moves us from living in self-centeredness to living in and for God; the more we do so, the more we live for others. John 17 reveals the deepest desire of the Heart of Jesus in His prayer for us right before His passion begins. What does He pray for? For unity and oneness.

The glory that You have given Me I have given them, so that they may be one, as We are one, I in them and You in Me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

I made Your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them." –John 17: 22-23;26

This prayer of the Lord before He leaves the earth goes back to Genesis and reveals that,

from the beginning, the Father willed that we be one with the Most Holy Trinity through our union with Christ crucified.

Men and women need each other to become themselves fully

John-Paul II continues in his Apostolic Letter:

To be human means to be called to interpersonal communion. The text of Genesis 2:18-25 shows that marriage is the first and, in a sense, the fundamental dimension of this call. But it is not the only one. The whole of human history unfolds within the context of this call. In this history, **on the basis of the principle of mutually being "for" the other, in interpersonal "communion," there develops in humanity itself, in accordance with God's will, the integration of what is "masculine" and what is "feminine."** #7

A man cannot be fully masculine or a woman feminine without relationships with each other. Yet, our relationships are often not of communion because they are dysfunctional and stressed. Only as we strive for communion modeled in Christ can our masculinity and femininity be restored. That is why our Lord teaches in our community, Love Crucified, to ponder all relationships in which we do not love through Him, with Him, and in Him. Through our relationships that lack "communion," we can discover what is wounded and distorted in our womanhood and manhood.

St. John Paul II:

Man - whether man or woman - is the only being among the creatures of the visible world that God the Creator "has willed for its own sake"; that creature is thus a person. Being a person means striving towards self-realization (the Council text speaks of self-discovery), which can only be achieved "through a sincere gift of self." The model for this interpretation of the person is God himself as Trinity, as a communion of Persons. **To say that man is created in the image and likeness of God means that man is called to exist "for" others, to become a gift.** #7

The Simple Path to Union with God brings us deep into our hearts to discover ourselves and who Christ is. Our self-discovery—wounds, disorders, lies, desires, sin patterns, misery—is always realized through our relationships with brothers and sisters.

Bishop Fulton Sheen, in the book, *Lift Up Your Heart: A Guide to Spiritual Peace*, writes about the importance of self-discovery:

This capacity for self-reflection, which animals do not have, makes man superior to the animal but also makes him subject to mental disorders when the soul does not fulfill the high destiny to which it is called—when it refuses to use the human faculty of unprejudiced examination of the self and its acts.

Bishop Sheen wrote about a universal reality; he is not speaking of a mental illness like schizophrenia. We may be functioning and seem normal, nice people, but we are all wounded because of original sin. Our mental disorders may include aggression, anger, depression, bad attitudes, fears, or anxiety. These come from not using our capacity for self-reflection and self-examination. Bishop Fulton Sheen wrote:

We are all conscious beings, but very few of us are really self-conscious. We are aware of the existence of the objects around us, but are not fully aware of ourselves.

Everyone else knows our faults and failings, but we can close our eyes to them. We are indignant when we hear ourselves accused, even though we have a sneaking suspicion that what we are told may be true. Our neighbors' defects of character we carry before our eyes, but our own are carried out of sight in a sack on our backs. **Every person can know himself, but often he knows everything except himself, and therefore he knows nothing.**

Questions For Reflection:

1. What relationships in my life lack "communion"?
2. What do these difficult relationships reveal about my disordered tendencies and desires?
3. How can I foster communion in these difficult relationships? What needs to be purified and healed in me?
4. Am I growing in "communion" with Christ and through Him with Abba?
5. How is this communion with God helping and guiding me in all my relationships?
6. What difficult person for me to love is God asking me to focus this work with?