



Gazing with unveiled face on the glory of the Lord

September 2015: Reflection - 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

...but whenever a person turns to the Lord the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. All of us, gazing with unveiled face on the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Knowing the necessity and benefits of prayer, and having experienced its beauty, most of us are trying to sustain a consistent and ever-deepening life of prayer. In spite of trying, sometimes even for years, many of us feel that our prayer does not sufficiently reflect the depth of our relationship with God. Ironically, we find ourselves speaking fondly and intimately of God with friends or experiencing his nearness in ordinary moments of life such as a walk in the evening - but when we actually sit down to pray we feel dry or apathetic. The Second Letter to the Corinthians refers to a veil that covers us and creates a barrier between us and the Lord. There may be many reasons for the dryness we experience in prayer, but what habits can we develop to grow steadily in meaningful and fruitful prayer?

Turning to God in increasingly smaller intervals can make a significant impact on our prayer life. For some reason we often find ourselves waiting for a “dramatic moment” to bring ourselves back to God. This can happen in different ways such as after sinning when we tell ourselves that we might as well just wait until it’s time to go for Confession later in the week, or when we avoid praying over a wound either because it seems too complex to approach or too petty to be brought to prayer. Other times, we may have a conflict with someone and spend so much mental energy and time complaining, criticizing, and analyzing yet gaining nothing. Finally, we crumble. We humble ourselves and come before God in our poverty, only to find that He has been waiting for us all along. We end up wondering why we took so long to come to Him. A Christian is called to spiritual childhood - to be simple and meek of heart, turning to God *often and with little hesitation*. These frequent reconfigurations to Christ become like small turns on a steering wheel that help keep us on our path of sanctity instead of large swerves to prevent a huge crash.

Another habit that can strengthen our prayer life is to become increasingly vulnerable in the presence of the Lord where *“there is freedom.”* It is natural to bury our wounds, insecurities and embarrassing struggles instead of bringing them to the gentle light of Christ. Instinct prompts us to fill our prayer with mindless words and empty phrases. Fear tells us that we will become ineffective or unable to come out of the sadness and the darkness if we go any deeper. But love always goes deeper. Even if we do not receive a healing the first time we approach the sensitive topic in prayer, we are deeply affirmed when we find that Christ sees us as we are and chooses to walk with us, even as our legs seem to give out from underneath us. When we allow Christ our Bridegroom to remove the veil behind which we hide, we do not just see Him more clearly, we allow Him to see us as we are - and we no longer play hide and seek with Him. To grow in intimacy with Christ, we must learn to become vulnerable.

In a letter to Blessed Agnes of Prague, St Clare portrays Christ as a mirror. She writes, “look into the mirror (Christ himself) daily and study well your reflection, that you may adorn yourself, mind and body, with an enveloping garment of every virtue.” Therefore, let us look to Christ. With unveiled faces let us behold His glory, so that we may be “transformed into the same image” - an image that is not foreign to us but the very image we were created to reflect.