

The Practice of the Presence of God

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May 16, 2021

Conversation 4:

Page 23: *The most excellent method he found of going to God was to do our normal activities without any view of pleasing men, and (as far as we are able) for the pure love of God.*

It is easy to suppose this would be much easier for a man or a woman isolated from the world in a monastery or convent than for busy active people who have many responsibilities and people to deal with on daily basis. I expect that during this pandemic isolation many people have learned this is not true.

We often hear and perhaps even say, "I don't care what anyone thinks about what I do." When I say that or when I hear someone say that, I know that they or I most certainly do care and know that we are not pleasing anyone, lest of all ourselves. The solution to this problem is to turn our thoughts toward God and seek to please Him.

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When we begin the spiritual life, we should thoroughly examine what we are.

It is difficult for people to truly examine who and what they are: There are two traps that the human-being must avoid. The first one is looking at all our faults and deciding that we are worthless and losing all hope. Another trap is to avoid looking our sins and our weaknesses thereby becoming incapable for change and growth.

St. Catherine said, "The journey towards true self-knowledge requires that we see ourselves directly under the gaze of the One who created us. "In the gentle mirror of God," Catherine writes, "the believer when at prayer, sees her own dignity; that through no merit of her but by his creation she is the image of God."

Letters:

Page 32: Brother Lawrence on the use of books and spiritual stages etc. "I have not followed such spiritual approaches. On the contrary, I have instinctively avoided them because I found that they discouraged me. This was why, when I took religious orders, I resolved simply to give myself to God alone and renounce everything but the love of Him."

"Story of a Soul – The Autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux" page105: St. Therese said a similar thing recalling when she was about 13, "It appeared to be Jesus Himself desired to give Himself to me, for I went to confession only a few times, and never spoke about my interior sentiments. The way I was walking was so straight, so clear, I needed no other guide but Jesus. I compared directors to faithful mirrors, reflecting Jesus in souls, and I said that for me God was using no intermediary, He was acting directly!"

I personally need and love the various devotions. However, in our individual search for God and for His meaning and purpose in our lives we must approach God with great humility and ask Him to show us the best path in to take when we are faced with so much good advice from our many saints.