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Public Diary: Formation with the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette

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Personal thoughts during prayer on the Spiritual Exercises:

These are personal thoughts that have come to me during prayer. They are not from Church teaching so they are from private prayer. I hope they can inspire reflection but I know they do not replace the teaching of the Church and have no Church approval.

God created everything for the human race. Even the Angels were created for us, out of God's infinite love. God knows that some of the Angels will not submit to serving him, that they would rather 'reign in hell than serve in heaven', but he is counting on that. Out of Love God knows a fundamental truth: there is no love without sacrifice. The only way to know that I love is my willingness to sacrifice and suffer for that which I love. I can also only truly receive love from another who is willing to sacrifice and suffer for me. God knows this.

So, each human person is created in such a way that they can truly express their love for God; they can sacrifice and suffer so that love can be real and known to them. In order for this grace to be present the human person must choose to sacrifice, to suffer, in order to truly love God. We are then given the desire to act upon our own will, to use all the things of this world for our own end and to use our bodies for a purpose of our choosing. Once this desire is fully present we are then presented with our true freedom, the choice to give all of this up and love God our Father with all of our heart, soul and strength: this requires us to sacrifice and, in turn, to suffer. Once this is known to us we can rightly call our lack of willingness to sacrifice for God sin.

So, God creates the Angels, letting them choose to 'reign in hell or serve in heaven'; this introduces Satan into the world, which introduces the desire for self-love; the fall of Adam and Eve. We all are now able to sacrifice, we are able to suffer; we are able to truly love God because love requires a choice, it requires freedom to choose: self-love (choosing to believe we know good and evil) or Love of God (God is the Way, the Truth, the Life).

Now, we are created in this world and given a life. During this life we will make a choice: 'serve in heaven or reign in hell'. To serve in Heaven is to be always in the presence of the Love of God and to have life (God reigns). To reign in hell is to be utterly given to self-love and be in death (I reign). We must start our life selfish, willful, desiring our own security, safety, power, pleasure and all the rest; then through sin, forgiveness enters our lives so we can experience true love, the choice is set before us: love of God or love of self. We cannot love without making a sacrifice, without suffering.

I believe that God does not allow a person to die until he knows of their choice; he knows what this choice is even if the person is not aware of it, even one not yet delivered from its mother's womb, and God will give us all the time we need to make that choice. I believe this explains miracles. A person who has not yet made that choice will be allowed to live until the choice is made. Once the choice is made

then the person is let to live in this world and die at the natural time. Our ability to accept the sacrifice and suffering of this world reflects our love of God. Our ability to be a witness in this world allows us to be an example to others so they too can choose God's love.

So, many will continue in this world, having chosen Love of God or self-love, so that others can also make that choice. Those who have chosen the Love of God become examples so that others can make the same choice (Light of the world and salt of the Earth). Those who have chosen self-love are serving the needs of Satan, forcing others into sin so they too (those of self-love) can experience forgiveness, love, and be presented with the choice of all choices. Where sin increases, grace overflows all the more (Romans 5: 20). Satan can only bring sin into the world, which paradoxically is what brings love into the world. Satan's sin is also his downfall: forcing love of God. Love is life, sin is death.

Jesus Christ is God's ultimate proof of that choice. Jesus Christ, as the word of God, became flesh and suffered and died for us, while we were still sinners, so we could know love; Christ came into the world because of sin so the world could know love, so we could be saved. We, as Christians, are called to the imitation of Christ: that is to suffer and to die for his sake, for the sake of love, for the sake of forgiveness, for the sake of sinners. The choice is now ours; quoting from Moses: 'choose life'.

Those who are called to serve God in a most special way are called religious by the Catholic Church. This special way of service is to declare, publically, their intent to serve God totally thru the taking of vows. In turn then their own will is subject to God thru the vow of obedience, their use all the things of this world is for God thru their vow of poverty and their use of their bodies is totally for God thru the vow of chastity. They truly become the light of the world and salt of the earth.

A prayer comes out of this reflection on zealousness for God and the seven deadly sins:

O God, let me be zealous for you so that when lust tempts me I quickly turn to you and remember your total gift to me; when envy taunts me I remember you are all I need; when pride twists me I know how to be humble with you as my Lord; when I am willful I remember that you are always right and I am always wrong; when I am greedy I remember that all I have is a gift from you; when I am slothful I remember how little time I have to give back to you; when I am a glutton I remember my body is a temple of your spirit; and when I am wrathful I remember your two greatest commandments of love; and I always remember to choose life.