

Growing in Grace #6—Living in the Spirit

In these Lenten Studies, we have talked about How we came to Christ and began our Journey in the Faith. And we have talked about our Growing in Grace as we learned about Prayer, Evangelism, and the Sacraments. The whole point of all these talks is to help us know that we can grow Spiritually, just as we grow physically.

Spiritual Growth brings us closer to God, so that we become more like Him, more like He intended us to be. I know, it is common to find some Christians who have come to Christ as Saviour and Lord but have never grown Spiritually. It is almost as if they thought that they already had it all. They proclaimed that they were “Saved,” instead of learning that Salvation is a Process—we are “Being Saved” now and will be “Saved” when we have finally arrived in His Presence in Heaven. God intended us to Grow in the Spirit, to Mature in our Faith, to become the Saints that He has called us to be. For us, the answer is to Live in the Spirit.

The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us: “...*let us lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith*” And St Paul says: “*Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own*”. Each quotation shows us that the Christian Life is a Process, and that we are called to Grow in Grace until we reach the Presence of the Lord in Heaven.

So, as we Grow in Grace, we begin to know that God is not in some far away place, like beyond the Clouds—no, He is right here, all around us, and if we will allow it, within our very heart. God is the Life giver, the very Presence in our world, loving us and all His creation. Don’t expect to see Him with your eyes—your eyes are not designed to see Spirit. But by Faith, you can know His Presence, to know His love, to know His joy. God is Spirit, and as Spirit can be everywhere all at once. Time and space have little meaning for God—He is here now and will be always. He knows you and loves you, but steps back when you turn away from Him, until you are ready to come back. God loves everyone equally, both the saint and the sinner, but is most pleased with those who turn to Him and want to Grow in Grace. He knows our sin but instead brings Forgiveness with His love. As we repent, He cleanses us, and brings us closer to Him, though He is always with us.

God is everywhere and available to everyone. He loves a little raccoon and a giant bear. He cares for you and me and everyone in the world. His greatest joy is feeling the love that we have for Him, because He knows that that same love will be shared with all whom we meet. He calls us into His Kingdom, and when we enter, we find that His Kingdom includes everyone of all ages, races, sexes, and colours.

But there is more. Some of the great Saints have found that they can talk with God everyday, and they do that by realizing how close He is to them. Unfortunately, many people think that God is far away, like the Old Testament says: above the clouds. But the

truth is that God is everywhere in His universe. Because He is Mind and not body, He is farther than the farthest star, and yet right beside us loving us.

Br Lawrence, in his booklet “The Practise of the Presence of God” shares this truth with us. Though he worked most of his life in the kitchen of his Monastery, he knew that God was there in the kitchen too—so he began to talk with Him. All day long, Br. Lawrence knew God’s Presence and shared everything with Him. He knew that God was beside him as he flipped an omelet on the stove. He adored Him and shared all his thoughts with Him as he washed the dishes. Br Lawrence knew that God was just as close to him in the kitchen as He was in the chapel, so he talked with the Lord wherever he was, and shared all with Him.

We can do the same in our own lives, by recognising that the Lord is with us all the time. He is the great Creator Mind who knows us and loves us, so we can recognise His Presence and talk quietly with Him all day long. After you get finished with work or with others, take a moment to come back to the Lord, thanking Him for His continuing Presence and Love. You might think of a little prayer every time that you recall His Presence, acknowledging that He is with you, and you with Him. As an example, here’s one that I use: *“Jesus my Lord I thee adore, oh make me love thee more and more.”* Tell God how you feel, tell Him what you are doing, tell Him how happy you are that He is right there.

If you want to learn more about this, download the emails from Fr. Richard Rohr. There is a new one every day, and each one shares more and more about the Lord. Fr. Richard Rohr keeps you learning how to stay in the Presence of God, how to live your life Spiritually, how to walk each day with the wonderful God who loves you and everyone everywhere. Practising this Presence of God will change the way you look at the world, how you work with others, how you see yourself in God’s beautiful world, and how you can Live in the Spirit. Let me end with this prayer:

“Blessed, praised, and adored be Jesus Christ, on His Throne of Glory in Heaven, in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and in the hearts of all His faithful people.” Amen