

Lecture 12: Plan of Life

The Priorities of a Balanced Spiritual Life

1. Introduction
 - a. There is often a misguided idea of what holiness is
 - i. It is not about spending all your free time in prayer
 - b. Holiness is about being over doing
 - i. The purpose of action is for the transformation into a more perfect image into the image of Christ
 - c. A plan of life is a daily schedule for growing in the spiritual life
 - i. Perseverance over time is a sure path to holiness
 - ii. It is much easier to sanctify all the activities of daily life
 - iii. A rule of life enables us to make better use of our time
 1. otherwise will inevitably waste a great deal of time
 - a. time is spent trying to decide what to do
 - b. key duties are often neglected
 2. consistency of use of time helps productivity and perseverance
 3. helps us supernaturalize all our actions
 - a. the virtue of obedience is developed
 - b. builds the virtue of punctuality and regularity
 4. should be a balance between firmness and flexibility (guard against scrupulosity and laxity)
 - d. Balance and a properly ordered hierarchy of activities is key
 - i. Balance does not equal comfort
 1. Should not be a rationalization for sloth or indulgence
 - ii. Sometimes, however, we are not ready for balance
 1. i.e. the alcoholic is not in capable of balance with alcohol
 2. takes humility to know we are not ready for balance
2. Prayer and the Sacraments
 - a. A specific time for prayer and meditation is the foundation
 - i. See last week's lecture on prayer
 - b. The sacraments, particularly the Mass and confession, should be regular
 - i. The Mass is the "source and summit" of our faith and should have a central role in our spiritual life
 1. it is here that we partake directly in the body and blood of Christ
 - ii. The sacrament of reconciliation heals us from sin and empowers us to live the moral life more perfectly and to receive more grace from Mass
3. Sanctification of One's State in Life
 - a. We are sanctified through the fulfillment of our duties when done with love and with God as our goal
 - i. The Little Way of Saint Therese
 - ii. Saint Joseph as a spiritual model for work
 - b. To keep a proper hierarchy of one's fulfillment of duties (first to God, then to family and self, then to work and neighbor)

- c. Our daily life offers countless opportunities to grow in grace
 - d. Make a morning offering each day
 - i. Start the day with the desire to live more generously every day
 - e. Unite our acts and sufferings with the redemption from the cross
 - f. Through work we participate in creation with God (CCC #307)
4. Physical Well-Being
 - a. An adequate amount of sleep is essential for a strong body and soul
 - b. Exercise keeps the body and emotions healthy, which empowers the soul and enables one to fulfill one's duties
 5. Devotion to Mary
 - a. Devotion to Mary is one of the surest ways to draw closer to Christ
 - b. Mary shows us the way to Christ
 - c. She formed Christ in her womb, she forms Christ in our souls
 6. Leisure
 - a. Healthy recreation is our means of being re-created
 - b. Should never be degenerative
 - i. Should never lead us to sin
 - ii. Should never be a break from virtue (i.e. "I deserve a little bit of this sin as an award/break")
 - iii. we should never feed selfishness, or have a concession to evil
 - c. May not be explicitly directed to God, but should not detract from our faith
 - i. i.e. watching the football game can be good leisure, but should not take the place of prayer or family
 - ii. television, movies or other forms of entertainment should not lead us to temptation
 - iii. pornography is a particularly dangerous and pervasive temptation that can undermine the entire spiritual life
 - d. Youth is not for pleasure – it is a moment of unique creativity
 7. Mortification
 - a. Friday fast (if not from meat from something else)
 - b. Daily mortification or self-sacrifice in order to strengthen the will
 - i. i.e. forego seasoning on food, ice in drink, less than hot showers, or anything that can be done silently as an act of self-sacrifice
 - c. Consideration of the needs and desires of others first
 8. Examination of Conscience
 - a. Daily examination of conscience to review the day to root out sin
 - b. To develop a spirit of honesty with oneself and with God
 - c. As a preparation for the next day
 9. Virtuous Friendship
 - a. There is a need for us to surround ourselves with a culture of virtue
 - b. Personal faith comes through the faith community
 10. Other Regular Spiritual Works
 - a. Tithing
 - b. Study of the Faith