

Sunday, September 23, 2012

Transformation (2)

We mentioned in the last article that God calls us to be transformed through many verses in the Bible. We also talked about the need to be transformed, and we started talking about **the tools necessary for transformation**, among which is: Reading the divine word of God regularly, discovering the divine love, and being adorned with humility. In this article, we will resume talking about tools for transformation:

4 – Endurance and patience

This is also an important key for transformation for he who rushes the outcome often does not reap any fruits. He who wants to be transformed should be patient so that his labor and efforts are not wasted. He must also be patient so that he gives the Holy Spirit a chance to gradually form the image of Christ within him, just like food that needs to be slow cooked to be ready. Slow cooking takes time and needs patient, while fast cooking may burn the food and not allow it to thoroughly cook, that is to say rushing things doesn't bring good fruits but rather it often causes harm to man.

Let's read what St. Macarius the great said about endurance and patience:

Longsuffering is patience, patience is triumph, triumph is life, life is the Kingdom, and the Kingdom is God.

The well is deep, but its water is good and fresh. The gate is narrow and the road is full of trouble, but the city is filled with joy and gladness. The tower is high and fortified, but inside are great treasures. Fasting is hard and difficult, but it takes us to the kingdom of heaven. Good deeds are difficult and arduous to do, but they save us from Hades through the mercy of our Lord, to whom glory is due.

5 – Life of Discipleship

Life of discipleship guarantees to man a continuous

growth because it equips the person with an open heart and makes him always willing to learn more. He who is adorned with the spirit of discipleship, regardless of his age, will always be transformed and continue to grow in the love of Christ and His knowledge. But he who lacks the spirit of discipleship, he ceases to grow.

It is important to be serious about discipleship, seriousness is essential to transformation, without it, our fruits will wither out. Seriousness and adhering to a strict regiment makes man walk towards a better life with steadfast steps.

6 – Regular partaking of the Holy Eucharist with reverence and humility.

Eucharist helps us to be profoundly transformed and continuously enlightened, it brings a new life within man. Eucharist transforms man's death to life and changes his being every time he partakes from the holy sacraments, *"He who feeds on Me will live because of Me."* (John 6:57). Through this great sacrament, we experience the love of Christ towards us, we become sanctified, and our sins are forgiven so the image of Christ shines more within us.

Additionally, Eucharist gives a true joy to the heart through the new life that we receive from our loving redeemer which replaces the old dilapidated life that is ruined by sin. As we become regular in partaking of communion we become fundamentally transformed.

7 - Regular Prayer

Regular prayer is key to the transformation of our lives as it opens to us the gates of heaven so the divine grace outpours on us. Grace is the force of transformation in our lives.

All of our struggles in life, evil looks, thought of hatred, lack of controlling the tongue, anger and being emotional, laziness and negligence, all of that will not be overcome without grace that we receive in prayers and metanias. When we place our weakness before Him and beseech Him for the wounds of sin within us, He alone is able to support us with His grace and heal our wounds, and then we begin to experience the transformation of our lives.

This explains why some people struggle with reoccurring sins in confession. The reason is neglecting prayer so they lose the source of grace and the person stays stand still with no progress what so ever. Then despair takes over so the person neglects confession with the false pretense that he doesn't benefit from it, thus, falls in a down spiral of apathy and loss.

In other words, he who goes to confession without praying regularly, is likened to a patient who goes to the physician and gets his illness diagnosed. The physician then prescribes some medication for his treatment but he [the patient] doesn't take any of the medications. Then the patient goes back to the physician and complains from the same illness, when the physician knows that the patient didn't take his medicine, he explains the importance of taking it regularly. The patient takes the medicine for few days and stops once more, then goes back again to the physician and complains of his pain, so the physician repeats his advice and so on. The patient gets tired of the whole thing and starts thinking that he doesn't have any benefit from this physician, "Why not try a different physician?" he thinks. When the same thing repeats with the other physician, the patient falls in despair, gives up, and decides not to go to physicians anymore, he then surrender to the illness which may be terminal.

Therefore, praying regularly, with fervency, and with sincere repentance is the main way for man to be transformed and to be healed from all of his spiritual ailment and to be elevated to a better level.

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