

Reflections

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Patience

The peculiarity here is that in the Bible, this word especially refers to the patience God has for us. God has patience with the men and women He has created. He tolerates their defects and allows humanity to continue populating the earth in spite of its poor conduct.

It is the Divine Spirit who is patient with us and who now comes to us. From Him we must learn to have with others the same patience He has with us. The book of Proverbs teaches us: “It is better to be patient than powerful. It is better to win control over yourself than over whole cities” (16,32). In his letters, St. Paul insists again and again on the fundamental virtue of self-restraint (tolerance). He invites us to cover ourselves with patience, to bear with one another out of love, to mutually forgive each other (Col 3, 12; Eph 4, 2; 1 Th 5, 14; 1 Co 13,4).

We have all had the following experience: The closer we are to a person, friction, annoyance and attitudes which irritate increase. Let us consider our spouses, our children, our relatives who live with us, our work colleagues and our friends. The sincere relationship and the basic affection toward the other person are maintained, but permanent esteem is tarnished with daily disgust.

A great deal can be done to lessen friction and improve living together: dialog, opening up, being truthful, correcting one another and accepting one another. A great deal can be done, but it all has to be based on the fundamental essence of patience, tolerance, and pure and simple humanly bearing with one another because in the final analysis, we know that the situation will never be ideal in ourselves or in others.

What we have to do, therefore, is to overcome the inevitable setbacks with anticipated resignation.

Things take time. Fruits ripen slowly. Nature takes its course and the seasons cannot be hurried.

The same thing happens with the cultivation of the Spirit. Time is needed. Patience is needed. Holy Spirit, convert us, even if a little bit at a time, into masters of patience.

Patience to listen to others

All those who surround us are, each and everyone of them, an angel from God who brings us His message. How do I maintain my attitude for listening to the word of God which comes to me by means of another person? First of all, through love, he or she is a word of God for me, but also through his/her wishes, needs and troubles. Everything is a word of God which is calling me: His/her gestures of love call me to give thanks, his/her wishes and necessities call me to service, his/her troubles call me to help wish solutions and to share.

Do I listen to those words of God which come to me through others? God wants to tell me something! When I feel there is something from God in what someone tells me, do I embrace him/her, do I open my heart so that word can find a dwelling place in me?

One has to listen to others, but one also has to speak to others. There are moments in which God wants to speak to someone through me. To speak is then a duty. To dialog is a duty. Then I am a word for someone else which he/she needs to listen to in order to grow. If I do not speak to him/her, then I am refusing to be a word of God.....Good News.....the Gospel of God for others.

Questions for reflection

1. Do I think of myself as a patient person? In this aspect, how do others see me?
2. Do I have moments of prayer to listen to what God is telling me through happenings or persons?
3. Do I listen joyfully when others speak?

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