

Reflections

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The Meaning of Guilt and Weakness

What is the meaning of guilt and weakness? Father Kantenich affirms that soon after acknowledging our limitations and guilt, we begin our religious life; everything else remains in what is ethical. And why is that?

Dependence on God. The true meaning of our guilt is *“to reach a strong awareness of dependence on God.”* True religiosity consists in this. God wants our childlike dependence. And the most valuable means to root us into the heart of the Father is our misery and our guilt. Because normally we do not learn dependence on God if we do not commit faults. It is worthwhile to mention here what Father Kantenich repeated to us many times: *“God loves me because of my faults; He loves me because I am small, not in spite of my being small.”* Hopefully, we could all experience: The Father God loves me because of my faults and guilt.

So, I have to learn to not only live with my weaknesses and sins, but also to benefit from them. I have to sincerely face my personal misery. I must taste anew all my weaknesses and faults and surrender them in childlikeness to the Father. I should *“place a ladder”* on each one of them in order to rise above to the Father of mercy. The meaning and the fruitfulness of my inner poverty should be: to grow without limitations in my attachment and love for God.

Childlike surrender. All should lead me to God because He is the great and final goal of my life. Therefore, **my weaknesses and faults should lead me to God.** What, then, should my attitude be? *“I should allow myself to fall,”* says Father Kantenich. Where should I let myself fall? I should allow myself to fall into the arms of God the Father. It is OK to struggle against our miseries, to make new resolutions, to have the ethical ideal shine before us. But the most important is and should always be to let ourselves fall into the arms of God the Father, to allow oneself to fall into the heart of the merciful Father.

“For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 COR 12, 10), St. Paul tells us. We are all weak when we think of our great ideal. And when are we strong? When we take from our frailty a twofold conclusion:

- (1) To say a joyful “yes” to my misery; to acknowledge before God my weaknesses and my smallness.
- (2) To extend my hands towards the merciful hands of God; to place myself confidently into his Father hands.

When I am weak, then I am strong. Why am I strong? Because my misery **associates** with the mercy of God. Because my smallness is the great title for appealing to the mercy of the Father God.

Father Kantenich repeated to us in the last years of his life: *“Acknowledged smallness is the omnipotence of the child and the impotence of the Father.”* My acknowledged weakness is the triumph over the heart of God. This is the great path to soar from this world into the world beyond. This is the masterpiece of my life.

Therefore, what should be the supreme fruitfulness of all our efforts to transform ourselves into new men, mature men, in harmony and whole? The great fruitfulness should be: to decidedly grow into my being a child, conquered by a **heroic childlikeness** before God the Father. It is a childlikeness which makes me acknowledge – with heroic humility – my miseries. It is a childlikeness which – with heroic confidence – hurls me into the loving arms of the Father God. And it is a childlikeness which – with heroism – leads me to surrender to the God of my life, to the Father of all mercies, forever.

Questions for reflection

1. Is it easy for me to acknowledge my smallness?
2. What do I understand by “letting myself fall into”?
3. Do I believe “heroic childlikeness” possible in me?

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