

Reflections

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The Crosses of Sanctity

Are crosses which come from God. We should not fear them because God will not send us any cross which we are not capable of bearing. We know that aspiring for sanctity is not something easy, to daily strive to improve or to overcome our defects. If we take this striving seriously, it sometimes becomes a heavy cross, but at the same time, it becomes a fruitful and blessed cross.

1. Magnanimity. The first cross which aspiring for sanctity imposes on us. Magnanimity is proper to the being who seeks what is great, who aspires to the heights, who tries to fulfill his high ideals. It is a greatness of soul which does not seek itself, YES, only God and his Will. In all things, he aspires for the greatest and the most perfect, for the love of God. As in few virtues, harmony between divine action and what is human manifests itself in this magnanimity. Magnanimity is the secret of authentic human nobility and is the mystery of the Saints. Without magnanimity, there are no authentic men and women, only dwarfs. And we, are we magnanimous like the eagle who tries to reach the sun? Better yet, are we narrow and mean like the chickens who are only interested in their piece of ground? Or, do we perhaps have the cross of renunciation and generous surrender?

2. Heroism. Without heroism, we cannot live a Christian married and family life: put up with each other everyday, overlook the defects of the other person, mature in our love for YOU, maintain a steadfast fidelity. But, by our own strength, we cannot live daily that spirit of a martyr. We need superior strength. The Virgin Mary has to implore for us the Holy Spirit with his seven gifts. Only if we are under the influence of the Holy Spirit will we be able to live Christian heroism.

Do we feel something of that extraordinary spirit within us? Or, better yet, do we belong to those of whom Father Kentenich often said?: *“In the tombs rest those who had great visions and who have achieved great works: we are dragged over their tombs as a generation of dwarfs.”*

3. Mortification (sacrifice). Another cross which forms a part of our sanctity is mortification or sacrifice in its multiple forms. It is about going against the dictates of our instincts and our nature. Father Kentenich said that the degree of mortification is the degree of our sanctity.

What counts is not so much the affective love, but better yet the effective love. And this is not manifested in words and caresses, but in the sacrifices we are disposed to fulfill for the persons we love.

Which should be our main forms of mortification? My first area of mortification should be: to educate and polish my own temperament and character. My best sacrifices are those which perfect my nature. Through our permanent ascetic striving for a systematic self-education, I am able to dominate and overcome my defects which I should know at this point of my life.

We can make sacrifices which help the body to be more noble and overcome its whims: for example, laziness, gluttony, the tendency for excessive pleasure, comfort, least effort, desire for sedatives, enslavement to the cigarette, etc. We must find our weak point in this sense and never lose sight of it. We should treat our body with “respectful love and with wise severity.”

Another area of mortification is my professional life. Above all else, I choose those sacrifices which help me to fulfill my work obligations in the most perfect way possible. Perhaps I should read, instead of novels, magazines about my profession so that I can continue my formation and my being able to be updated.

Questions for reflection

1. Do we have the cross of generous surrender?
2. What efforts do I make to correct my defects?

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