

Reflections

Father Nicolas Schwizer

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Childlikeness

What is the great ideal and mystery of the life and fruitfulness of the Lord? To always fulfill, and in everything, the Will of the Father. Every impulse of his heart, of his will and of his body are not determined by the desires of nature. No, only the loving Will of the Father decides everything.

Probably, in certain opportunities his nature clamors: “Father, if it is possible, may this chalice bypass me,” says Jesus at Gethsemane. But this supplication is surpassed by the solemn words: “May your Will be done and not mine.”

Let us recall the parable of the two sons, Jesus demands this attitude of them, also from us: that not only do we say Yes but – especially – that we do the Will of the Father. The true greatness of man is in surrendering, at each moment, like Christ to the Will of the Father.

It is the characteristic attitude of the child before the Father. Our true holiness consists, therefore, in surrendering in childlikeness to God-Father, just as Jesus did. We will be ever so more perfect and great, the more we imitate that knowing and feeling as a child of Christ (child, of Jesus).

And the same if we see the great Saints of all times: Saint Theresa and Saint Francis of Assisi. And if we ask ourselves, why are they such great and kind saints, the answer is not so difficult: It is because they were perfect children before God. They both lived, in their time, in an exemplary way, the attitude of childlikeness, simplicity, spontaneity in their relationship with God-Father. And thus they also show us the quickest and most efficient way to reach our Christian perfection.

But modern man is sick: He does not want to be a child of God, rather he wants to dethrone God so that he can occupy the throne. One of the greatest Swiss educators, Henry Pestalozzi, is of the opinion that the greatest calamity for humanity today is the lost sense of childlikeness.

Because God can only unfold his paternity when man is a child, when he opens up in childlikeness before him.

What fascinates us in the child is, especially, his simplicity and his naturalness. Also our childlikeness is perfect simplicity. It means to be great and strong on the outside, but in the spiritual life to be naïve, frank, spontaneous. It means to be authentic men and women in the world, but to be children before God. When man returns to be a child before God, all that is superfluous (unnecessary), all that is of secondary importance, all that is artificial falls to the wayside.

Childlikeness gives an idea of God’s simplicity and naturalness because God is the most simple, the most natural person that exists. So, the more we become like children, the more we will achieve being like unto God.

Father Joseph Kentenich, founder of the Apostolic Schoenstatt Movement, who has lived in an exemplary way childlikeness before God and fatherliness before many, tells us: “If I am a childlike man, I do not worry unnecessarily. God has prepared and foreseen the plan of my life, and it is being fulfilled. What I deal with at each moment, is determined or permitted by Him. I know, therefore, that what the Father sends me is always what is best for me. And this is enough for me.”

As a child, I live for the moment and at each moment I listen to the Father for what I must do. I must say Yes to his plan and allow myself to be led by Him because as a childlike man I know my work is great only in the measure in which it corresponds to the wish of the Father. And in this childlike and joyful Yes to my path, I have the solution to all the enigmas of life. And, furthermore, I am fulfilling the condition for entering Heaven: “Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” (MT 18, 3)

Dear brothers and sisters, therefore, let us ask Christ and Mary that they give us something of that attitude of a child just as they had it in such an exemplary way.

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