



LAY CARMELITES
ONTARIO AND NORTH WEST NEW YORK

1995 - 2020

ANNUAL RETREAT - KEY NOTES

THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD



BY LINDA WISZ, T.O.C.

REGIONAL FORMATION COORDINATOR



THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD - KEY NOTES

BY LINDA WISZ, T.O.C.

REGIONAL FORMATION COORDINATOR

FRIDAY, 2ND OCTOBER - SATURDAY, 3RD OCTOBER 2020

1.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2020 First Session:

OUR CALL TO COMMUNION

The retreat began with Fr. Nicholas reminding us of the very important fact that we are all CALLED TO BE WITH GOD.

He brought to our attention the importance of St. Albert's Rule (chapters 4-11), an oratory should be built among the cells. To meet for mass daily. We are to build an Oratory in our hearts. Ora (from the Latin meaning, to pray or to beg) pray, where God can dwell. Here we are to pray and make space for Him.

That is our Call : to live a life of Intimacy with GOD; to grow in our commitment; to get to know Him; to develop a deeper love for Him; by recalling Christ in our minds; by spending more time with Him; talking with Him, heart to heart. Remembering the scripture, "that the love of God has been poured into our hearts".

Fr. Nicholas reminds us of the deeper aspect of intimacy - Communion. Receiving the body and blood of Jesus. To actually get to the depth of the action when receiving Jesus in the Eucharist.

Our relationship is to be communal. Meeting together for daily mass, when possible. We are a community.

From the Rule of Albert: Foundational - (4 or 11)

Oratory of the heart. The Be all and End all, a place for Prayer. We are to have a place of prayer. Always in a relationship with God. Though we are in our private cell for prayer we are to be open, and hospitable. To cultivate the world around us. But called to stay in our cell, in our lane. To be content where God has put us accepting the realm of authority.

2.



THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD - KEY NOTES

BY LINDA WISZ, T.O.C.

REGIONAL FORMATION COORDINATOR

FRIDAY, 2ND OCTOBER - SATURDAY, 3RD OCTOBER 2020

We are in relationship with God in the world. We are not islands. What we do affects others. We either aid, help or hinder them. Our words and our actions matter.

Heavy Perspectives:

We are challenged to look for the barriers, that prevent us from moving closer to God. What are our stumbling blocks? Do our devotions keep us from being with God?

Fr. Nicholas cautioned us to be watchful of the 'Shoulds' and 'Oughts', to be careful of the barriers that keep us from entering the oratory to be present to God. Be aware, when journaling, circle these words and others, like envy, anger, bitterness, resentment. Be careful in relationships with others, where envy can enter like a vine and turn against each other.

Self-Suspicion - of ourselves

Besides knowing God, we are called to know ourselves. Consider reading a book a month - letting the words sink in. Do not succumb to the greed of gluttony, of many books. If our heart starts beating faster, ask – Why? When around another person, and negative feelings arise, ask - Why?

Fr. Nicholas stressed the point that we are to see ourselves as Christ sees us. As He shows us who we are to Him, a beautiful image of God. It is not about condemnation but journeying into Revelation.

The Dance of Intimacy - Seeing our temperament; see how we act and move around people - through the power of the Holy Spirit. Self- Knowledge is meant for growth in love. He reminded us that we are called to love ourselves - as we are all loveable.



THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD - KEY NOTES

BY LINDA WISZ, T.O.C.

REGIONAL FORMATION COORDINATOR

FRIDAY, 2ND OCTOBER - SATURDAY, 3RD OCTOBER 2020

3.

He-I; I-He ... Jesus in the Church and the Church in Jesus ..we-He; He-we.

We are one body, the church. The Church and the power of the Holy Spirit, to the Father, on behalf of the bridegroom - Jesus.

Fr. Nicholas stressed the Importance of *Listening*:

When we attend MASS, we are to HEAR mass, it is about BEING WITH GOD. If it is a burden to go, go anyway. IT SHOULD BE AN ULTIMATE MOMENT OF THE WEEK. Fr. Nicholas compared it to the dance of a Bride and Groom. We are to Meet his gaze and look into his eyes. It is to be a moment of Jubilation, Gratitude and Praise. A union through the Holy Spirit. We are to leave church taking our Saviour back to our Oratory. This is what we are being called to, to the best of our ability.

Questions:

How to have a deeper relationship with God. Ask God to guide you when you are at mass; have a prayer buddy in community.

Watch out for spiritual warfare.

One thing to watch out for and many Christians fall into this type of rebellion. They pray against another's will. We are not to pray in violation of another person's will, i.e. if a person wants to marry a particular person, often they will ask God to change that person's will to help them to choose marriage. This is wrong. We all have free will.



THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD - KEY NOTES

BY LINDA WISZ, T.O.C.

REGIONAL FORMATION COORDINATOR

FRIDAY, 2ND OCTOBER - SATURDAY, 3RD OCTOBER 2020

4.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2020 ----- PART 2

Second Session:

TO ADORE

Fr. Nicholas reminds us of Brother Lawrence message "Adoration". This is a needed movement in our lives.

Adore - meaning the act of mind and will, praise, virtue of justice to give to another what is their due. Adoration as people of the church, we give to God an act of worship. Our Dependency on God.

God loves us and the other. **Adoration is a movement of the whole self to the one who calls it and is worthy of it. Then everything else is in proper working relationship. Piety is a gift that brings about the ability to know that God loves us.**

Justice is when we see someone who needs water and we have lots of water, and give that person a drink. Charity is when we see someone needing water, we sit down with them and drink the water together. We get into the realm of charity and going down to the depths of charity.

Prayer is To Beg - To turn our petitions over to God. Utter dependency on God and we receive our nourishment from God.

The Rule of St. Albert calls us to meditation upon the scripture day and night.

Song of Songs -1:3 ... we see the bride (church) thinking about the bridegroom, Jesus Christ, this a way to understand Adoration.



THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD - KEY NOTES

BY LINDA WISZ, T.O.C.

REGIONAL FORMATION COORDINATOR

FRIDAY, 2ND OCTOBER - SATURDAY, 3RD OCTOBER 2020

5.

Fr. Nicholas talked about sacramental reality. We exist in and by the church, providing the sacraments to us. This is not a sentiment of the heart. It is not about us. It is about Him. We are not the centre of the universe. God is.

Baptism - We are called to be like Christ. Our life of discipleship is one to bring us into the likeness of Christ. we are risen with him in our Baptism which brings about the reality of who is Christ, and in Christ.

Look at St. Paul - see how he uses the word "in".

CCC 265 By the grace of Baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ... we share in the life of the Blessed Trinity, filled with the anticipation to be able to see.

Faith the Beginning of Eternal Life

CCC 163, Father makes us taste in advance the light of the beatific vision. The goal of our journey of our life below.

Psalm 80- see him as he is; we are just waiting for eternal life, we live it here and now and we celebrate it, see 1Cor. 13

The Purpose of the Presence of God

We must keep our eyes fixed on God in everything we say, do or undertake. See Maxim 2 from the booklet.

Our goal is to be the most perfect adorers of God in this life, so our heart focuses on him, you are my all, my everything.

Ask yourselves ... Before you speak, is this for and of God or the work of the flesh or the devil.



THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD - KEY NOTES

BY LINDA WISZ, T.O.C.

REGIONAL FORMATION COORDINATOR

FRIDAY, 2ND OCTOBER - SATURDAY, 3RD OCTOBER 2020

6.

Our goal is to depend on grace in proportion to its desire for greater perfection. Maxim 5. God is in the moment of every day. It is the awareness of God's presence in each moment ... God is with me now.

How are we able to Adore?

We are to be the most perfect adorers, being free from distraction of lesser things. The things that reflect the goodness of God.

We become focused to the flame he wants to give us. The soul depends on the grace. The spirit of ownership.

God is the one that brought us into the dependency of God.

Perfection - is to be understood through the wholeness of our being. We will lack nothing that our being needs as we grow in our desire of God. He will satisfy this desire for him that he has placed within us.

We are on this pilgrimage of life. This perfection of our being, purity and charity. Adoration aids us in and by and through.

What comforts me is that I see God by Faith. First, read Br. Lawrence's maxims and then go to the letters. Most of his letters are written to Nuns and Sisters.

He yearned to see God in Faith. God you are first and foremost in my life. In adoration we respond to the desire of God to be in relationship with Him. I no longer call you servants but friends. Adoration brings us into light from darkness.



THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD - KEY NOTES

BY LINDA WISZ, T.O.C.

REGIONAL FORMATION COORDINATOR

FRIDAY, 2ND OCTOBER - SATURDAY, 3RD OCTOBER 2020

7.

CCC 2095 - The theological virtues are faith, hope and charity. When we are informed, it helps us to give life to the moral virtues and helps us to give to God what is his due.

Phil 2:5, we are called to put on the attitude of Christ, Him only shall you serve CCC 2096-2097

Book Recommended - Strange Gods by Elizabeth Scalia.

Primary teacher of children are parents. You are the ones to teach your children how to pray, teach them. Even if they don't want to go to mass, make them go. If they complain tell them that you were there with me. Give them praise for being there. Find music that you can discuss with them, art, smells, candles, and saying, "thank you God."

Third Session:

HOW TO BE ADORERS OF GOD

VIRTUAL UNION

In 1 John 19:20. Sometimes we get stuck in our life. God is greater than who we are.

Rev. 2:13 ... God is the one who is moving us. Our God is first

James 4:8 Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Our heart's eyes can become focused on other sources that do not yield life; they give us a double vision. God is calling us to be so focused on Him.

1 Thess. 3:13 - Saints helps us to remain united to God. Ignorance is the breeding of sin. We are called to be wise.

Avoid Sin -- God strengthens us when we stay committed to his way of holiness. Get rid of the weeds.

8.



THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD - KEY NOTES

BY LINDA WISZ, T.O.C.

REGIONAL FORMATION COORDINATOR

FRIDAY, 2ND OCTOBER - SATURDAY, 3RD OCTOBER 2020

In charity and truth - we are to please God and avoid everything that is not of God. Three enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Will what we are doing this moment...this action, please God? Will this focus be on him? If the answer is No ... maybe, we should not do it.

The intention of the heart and circumstances mitigate the seriousness of one`s action.

Luke 9:46-47 focus, what are the intentions, to clean out the weeds of our heart. Focus on God...like a fireplace, to radiate out the heat of the fire. Our heart is a place where we come together with God.

Mt. 15:19 For out of the heart come evil intentions. Stout consciousness.

Heb. 4:12: Be satisfied with the condition where God places you. God is with you in this cancer or suffering. You are with me and your suffering becomes redemptive. Envy comes in when we are not satisfied with what we have when we see others have more.

Chapter 6

How to be Adorers of God - Fundamental Guide

Paragraph 17 - from booklet

The first means is the great purity of life. par 27, 28, 29

Fidelity to cultivate our awareness of God`s presence in our lives.

No. 20. it is only right that the first to beat with life should be the first and last to love God. Lord, help your love grow in the world.



THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD - KEY NOTES

BY LINDA WISZ, T.O.C.

REGIONAL FORMATION COORDINATOR

FRIDAY, 2ND OCTOBER - SATURDAY, 3RD OCTOBER 2020

Works of memory to shape our acts of awareness. What brought us to this moment of God. Think on actions or scripture verses, moments we remember to bring us back to God.

What are things you need to help you to remember

Diligence of easiest ways of prayer. Don't let, 'oughts' and 'shoulds', mislead us. I should have done this.

No. 22. Addresses the senses (mortification). We cannot give ourselves the satisfaction that our hearts yearn for in this world.

Pinch yourself, use an elastic band, watch out for vanity, fast from computer, fast and cut back on TV.

Question - On suffering -

Col.1:24, I rejoice in my sufferings united to Christ on the cross. Christ in his humility allows us to bring our sufferings and when joined to the church, they are redemptive, brings unity and builds up the church. Those who are ill, believe that your sufferings are very profound right now.

Yes, we care about the poor not just physically but spiritually.

Wearing the scapular is a prayer... When you are suffering, tempted, touch something that is holy, Blessed objects, The Crucifix, holy water.

Your tears are holy; psalm 56:8, he collects our tears in a bottle, you have recorded each one in your book. ...

When words fail pray, " my lord and my God" ... Thy will be done.

10.

Fourth Session:

LET US NOT SETTLE



THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD - KEY NOTES

BY LINDA WISZ, T.O.C.

REGIONAL FORMATION COORDINATOR

FRIDAY, 2ND OCTOBER - SATURDAY, 3RD OCTOBER 2020

Don't settle for seeking and loving God only, don't settle for consolations. We are called for so much more.

We are a Pilgrim people ----- nourished by Christ.

Called to Evangelization

Phil 3:20 Read - citizenship is in heaven.

John 18:36 Jesus says: My kingdom is not from this world.

God gives gifts for a purpose and if he gives us something it is to aid us along the journey. God tries to strengthen us and to become more like him.

We are called to go out into the world and evangelize others. The letters of Br. Lawrence are about his going out into the world by reaching out to nuns and sisters.

The way Brother Lawrence lived in his heart, people started to see the presence of God in him and asked him what he did and why and he did these things and he evangelized and shared what he did in his life.

CCC 2709 What is Contemplative prayer.

St. Teresa answers: Contemplative prayer (oración - mental) in my opinion is nothing else than a close sharing between friends. Contemplative Prayer seeks Him whom my soul loves. We seek Him because to desire Him is always the beginning of love and we seek Him.

11.

in that pure faith, which causes us to be born of Him and to live in Him. In this inner prayer, we can still meditate but our attention is fixed on the Lord himself.

We must be constantly a people who are open to the process of conversion. We must be Christians through our deeds.

We pray and we go out into the world and put our love in action.



THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD - KEY NOTES

BY LINDA WISZ, T.O.C.

REGIONAL FORMATION COORDINATOR

FRIDAY, 2ND OCTOBER - SATURDAY, 3RD OCTOBER 2020

We are **not** called to **be liked** by the world. We are heralds of Jesus Christ. When the world challenges, be prepared to answer them.

We want to be kind not to be nice. See others as kin. See others in a kinship. Nice performs to what is expected. Can be artificial

Book Recommended – On Reading Well by Karen Swallow Prior.

Fr. Nicholas talked about how we must be temperate even in our mortification. The devil can use even our mortification against us.

It is important to remember, it is not about us, he called us to holiness as Carmelites. How can you invite God to be in you? Ask yourself, what takes you away from God...angry, upset, angry words, impatience?

Looking at Idols - what habits do we have, cell phone, internet, spend less time on them. Talking and chatting with friends. Avoid gossip. We are not accomplishing anything, we need balance.

Idols steal the light given by God. Money is an idol - so many don't think where money comes from. Whatever you take more time with, is not putting God first.