

Towards what is essential

Homily, 15 October 2019 – Krzysztof Gasperowicz SDS

Tuesday of the Twenty-eighth Week in Ordinary Time (I)
[Rom 1, 16-25; Ps 19:2-3, 4-5; Lk 11, 37-41]

Deep down, I believe we all are trying to find what is truly central to our lives. The ultimate truth at the core of our being. We all know the profound insight of Saint Augustine from his well known book “Confessions”: “O Lord, our heart is restless until it finds its rest in you”. It reveals the condition of the human heart.

I am sure that even being here on our spiritual retreat, each of us – in different ways – experience tensions between discovering the truth about ourselves and having the courage to follow that truth. In other words, we are looking at what is central to our lives. Essentially, what will move us to be true followers of Christ? How do we go about this? I think that our saints can give us various examples and lessons.

Today we remember the life of St Theresa of Avila. She is known as a doctor of the Church and a mystic. However, her mystical experiences, extraordinary as they were, do not really get to the heart of Theresa’s spiritual teaching. Her most famous work was the “Internal Castle”. Theresa discovered that Christ was dwelling in the very depth of her soul. And she found it to be like a castle. For the people of XVI century, the castle was the place of power and safety. Theresa of Avila realized that to be grounded in Christ is to be grounded in that very power which created the cosmos, the power that is beyond place and time. By the way, Fr Francis Jordan called this place the “very deep soul”. It is when a person can engage intimately with God.

Theresa of Avila found Christ dwelling within her like a castle: a place of power and a place of peace. In one of her prayers she wrote: “Let nothing disturb you, nothing frighten you, all things are passing, God is unchanging. Patience gains all; nothing is lacking to those who have God: God alone is sufficient”.

Being on this retreat using lectio divina, we are allowing ourselves to be exposed to the word of God. The word of God that leads our life towards what is essential, what is central to living fully. We know that when God becomes the primary thing in our life, everything else will fall into its rightful place. It is interesting that in the Bible, diablo – diabolos - means the one who is divided into many things, is chaotic. The word of God as it confronts us, merges us, integrates us, and gives us the desire to follow our deeper truth. Let us ask the King of our internal castle to reign over us and transform us according to His divine saving will.

