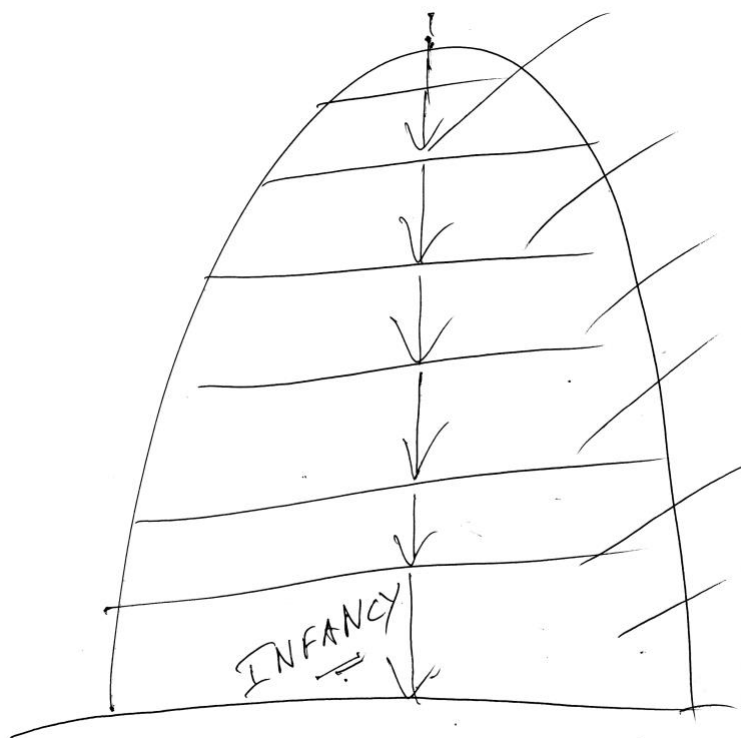




THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Formation in the Christian Contemplative Life

20: Formation of the Homemade Self: The Existential Model, Part 2-Continued



Sketch by Thomas Keating, from *Invitation from God*

*Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence
nor take from me your Holy Spirit.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation;
uphold me with a willing spirit.*

- Psalm 51:11-14

"The spiritual journey is based on the growth of divine love, the capacity to relate, to belong, to support, to forgive ... and in the Christian religion: 'Love your neighbor as yourself' ... not ... sentimental love, romantic love, but the love that cares, that is concerned — and this is what it means to be a human being. Any disposition less than the effort to love everyone in the world without exception and those closest to us unconditionally is subhuman! It's irrational. It's been brought to an end by Jesus. ... A spiritual discipline begins when we take ourselves in hand and ... are open to love, to human growth, to higher states of consciousness, to union, and to unity and which manifests that in a caring, loving, concerned and practical way."
- Thomas Keating, ending of the video "Formation of the Homemade Self: The Existential Model-Part 2"

We join with the psalmist in asking for a pure heart.

Meditations

"Now heart in the ancient world was taken more generally to stand for the 'inner man,' and in particular for the mind and the will. ... The heart is a symbol of what we are in ourselves, of the source of all our reactions and aspirations. 'Blessed are the pure in heart' will mean something like 'Blessed are those who have a pure source of life in them.' ... Blessed are those whose inner principle is pure, unmuddled."
- Simon Tugwell, *The Beatitudes: Soundings in Christian Traditions*

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"The opening of the inner heart allows a true and real expansion of consciousness and would lead to *compassion* for the world. The word is used of Christ. It would not be a sentimental *act* but a permanent *state* of insight with a new feeling of I."
- Maurice Nicoll, *Psychological Commentaries on The Work of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*

*... because the love of God has been poured out
into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us ...
The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart ...*
- Romans 5:5; 10: 8

To Practice

- View the video excerpt "Centering Prayer and Divine Therapy," from *Invitation from God*. It is about six minutes in length.
- Reflect upon how practicing Centering Prayer is bringing to conscious awareness the wounds of a lifetime for your healing. Is there greater compassion for yourself, for the world?

Resources for Further Study:

You may wish to read the Introduction and Chapters 1-5 and 7 in *Invitation to Love* (20th Anniversary Edition) and the Introduction through Chapter 6, in older editions.

Notes and Reflections: