

Spiritual Drive – Hunger for What is Right



VIRTUE CORNER

Spiritual Drive – the second Lumen virtue in our course on the four virtues under the Lumen Core Value of FAITH!

Jesus promised: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6). What did he mean? He meant that if you really want the right thing, you will get it. Most of the time, we don’t really decide what we want. We decide how to get what we want, but we don’t decide *what* we want. We kind of just presume to desire basically what we see other people around who we want to be like desire. Thus, we want to have a nice house and a good job and plenty of money – but we never really think about why we want those things. Or we want a fancy car, a lifestyle full of travel, a position of influence or power – but we never really ask ourselves why. Or we may be much more humble about it, just wanting a decent living so we can settle down and raise a family – but why?

Deep down, everyone really wants the same thing: profound, lasting happiness. We want it because we were made for it. Every other desire is linked to that one. Every decision is made with that in mind. The first step to attaining the satisfaction Christ promises is consciously recognizing and accepting that desire: “What I want out of life is to be truly happy, just the way God made me to be.” The second step is looking for that happiness in the right place, and the right place is “righteousness,” which means living in a “right” relationship with God and with others, as described by Christ in the Gospels. The happiness we seek is the byproduct of that right relationship, the fruit of an active and energetic love for the Gospels.

Spiritual Drive is all about striving after the right thing – a deep relationship with God and the right things that lead to and flow out of that relationship.

The result of “seeking first the Kingdom of God” is that everything else will be added to it. We should be driven and hungry for those right things that lead to spiritual life! The blessedness that results is that happiness we all desire. The Greek word Jesus uses for blessed is *makarios*. They used this term to describe Cyprus – the Happy or Blessed Isle! It had all you needed to be happy! Sun, beach, fruit aplenty, wild life. It was a self-contained paradise. The Man who is driven towards spiritual treasures will be like Cyprus. He will be blessed, happy, *makarios* – a place that has it all and needs nothing else!

The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for...

— Catechism of the Catholic Church #28



GOSPEL REFLECTION (30 MIN)

“The Greatest Commandment”

Psalm 63

God, you are my God, I pine for you; my heart thirsts for you, my body longs for you, as a land parched, dreary and waterless. Thus I have gazed on you in the sanctuary, seeing your power and your glory. Better your faithful love than life itself; my lips will praise you. Thus I will bless you all my life, in your name lift up my hands. All my longings fulfilled as with fat and rich foods, a song of joy on my lips and praise in my mouth. On my bed when I think of you, I muse on you in the watches of the night, for you have always been my help; in the shadow of your wings I rejoice; my heart clings to you, your right hand supports me. May those who are hounding me to death go down to the depths of the earth, given over to the blade of the sword, and left as food for jackals. Then the king shall rejoice in God, all who swear by him shall gain recognition, for the mouths of liars shall be silenced. (Psalm 63)

Questions for Discussion:

1. Context. A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. This was probably written while he was fleeing from Absalom, his son who sought his life to obtain the throne; certainly at the time he wrote it he was king (Psalms 63:11), and hard pressed by those who sought his life. So his prayer and longing for God comes amidst difficulties.
2. What does David pine after/long for? What do I pine after/long for? A good indication of the answer is what I think of when my head hits the pillow or when I first wake.
3. What is better for David than life itself?
4. He blesses God even as his own son persecutes him. Why is it hard to keep faith in God amidst trials? Why do we automatically think God has abandoned us when it is clear that God tests those whom he loves?
5. All David's longings are fulfilled by God, like when one is totally satisfied after a rich meal. Have you ever felt times when God has filled and satisfied you or a time when you didn't feel that?
6. David muses at night about God's fidelity, how He has always been his help. What keeps you up at night and would using your memory to recall God's fidelity help?
7. David still wants justice against those who seek his life. But this natural desire doesn't distract him from a deeper desire for God. How can we keep our desire to be justified and protected from distracting us from putting God first?

The beatitude we are promised confronts us with decisive moral choices. It invites us to purify our hearts of bad instincts and to seek the love of God above all else. It teaches us that true happiness is not found in riches or well-being, in human fame or power, or in any human achievement -- however beneficial it may be -- such as science, technology, and art, or indeed in any creature, but in God alone, the source of every good and of all love. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1723)





CASE DISCUSSION (30 MIN)

2 ways to go about it. Read the Case and discuss afterwards how it can apply to your life of Faith. Or ask a member to voluntarily offer their challenges in living out spiritual drive - a hunger for God and the things of God - at home, in the work place or in their lumen action (volunteer work). The circle can offer some personal experiences on how they have confronted and resolved similar difficulties.

In 1726, Benjamin Franklin at the age of 20 created a system to develop his character. He wrote in his autobiography "I propos'd to myself, for the sake of clearness, to use rather more names, with fewer ideas annex'd to each, than a few names with more ideas; and I included under thirteen names of virtues all that at that time occur'd to me as necessary or desirable, and annexed to each a short precept, which fully express'd the extent I gave to its meaning." The 13 virtues he listed out were the following:

1. Temperance. Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.
2. Silence. Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.
3. Order. Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.
4. Resolution. Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.
5. Frugality. Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing.
6. Industry. Lose no time; be always employ'd in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.
7. Sincerity. Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.
8. Justice. Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.
9. Moderation. Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.
10. Cleanliness. Tolerate no uncleanness in body, cloaths, or habitation.
11. Tranquility. Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.
12. Chastity. Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.
13. Humility. Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

He then made a little score card in which the initials of the days of the week ran across the column heads of the grid. Then the virtues were listed down the left-hand side. He graded himself each night before going to bed as to how he practiced the virtues each day.

The point is that he so desired to grow in perfection that he was driven to form himself. You can't manage what you can't measure and so he found a way to manage his growth by making it measurable.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Does my spiritual drive lead me to have a plan for spiritual growth?
2. There are some dangers in trying to quantify spiritual progress and there are dangers in not trying to examine it all. Talk about some of both.
3. In Lumen we have a Business Plan for the Soul which can help us give order to our Spiritual Drive. How could that help me?



Resources:

<http://www.thirteenvirtues.com/>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2011/04/picture-of-the-day-benjamin-franklins-daily-schedule/237615/>

Spiritual Drive in Practice

Spiritual Drive Does...

- Make and keep substantial but realistic prayer commitments
- Constantly learn to pray better
- Read and study the Bible, especially the Gospels
- Read and study solid spiritual books – like the lives and writings of the saints, the Catechism, and the writings of the popes
- Strive to develop an authentic friendship with Christ
- Give priority to the sacramental life
- Conceive of the meaning of life as knowing, loving, and imitating Jesus Christ

cfr. Lumen Core Value Reference Manual

Spiritual Drive Doesn't...

- Go to Church just out of routine
- Pray just out of routine
- Let professional concerns crowd out Christ
- Try to resolve problems without seeking God's light and help
- Treat the Church's authority with indifference
- Relax its effort to know, love, and imitate Christ better every day
- Try to live the Christian life without guidance from a trustworthy spiritual coach

The Wisdom of the Ages on Spiritual Drive

God alone satisfies. (St Thomas Aquinas)

When I am completely united to you, there will be no more sorrow or trials; entirely full of you, my life will be complete. (St Augustine)

I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it. (Thomas Jefferson)

The difference between try and triumph is a little umph. (Author Unknown)

Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there. (Will Rogers)

Plough deep while sluggards sleep. (Benjamin Franklin)

No man ever wetted clay and then left it, as if there would be bricks by chance and fortune. (Plutarch)

Be not afraid of going slowly; be afraid only of standing still. (Chinese Proverb)

It is a most mortifying reflection for a man to consider what he has done, compared to what he might have done. (Samuel Johnson)



Lumen Core Values Self-Assessment (10 minutes)

Core Values Assessment. Spend 10 minutes in silence assessing positive and negative examples of how you have express your faith in regular prayer and spiritual drive in your relationship with others and God. The below quadrant can help in jotting down some of your assessment as well as a tool for the whole Lumen Circle and how you can let it be a leaven in your life.

What struck me in this circle and how I might apply it to my THINKING. What CRITICAL ISSUES am I facing? What is the biggest CHALLENGES with these issues I face and what OPPORTUNITIES does it present.

Prayer:

Family:

Business:

Lumen Action:

What ACTION STEPS can I take now or long term? Develop a concrete resolution for how you can improve in your efforts to exercise Christian charity in you interactions with others during the next month. Your resolution should be a specific action or activity that is easily measured.

