

29. November 2019

Answering questions
„Self-denial“

In order to complete the first question of how to lead a contemplative life even in normal circumstances in the world, some elements are repeated, which can help to find a contemplative attitude.

1. To do the various tasks and commitments in the world as work in the Kingdom of God for the Lord.
2. To walk the way of holiness within the given living environment.
3. Jealously watch over regular periods of prayer and leave behind unnecessary, incidental, and unimportant things in order to be with the Lord.
4. Seek meditations of the Word of God, contemplation of the omnipresence of God, perceiving God's presence in the heart (Francois de Sales), silent (Eucharistic) Adoration, prayer of the heart, rosary, to form an "inner chamber of the heart" and to be there often.
5. Enter into a living and intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit and learn to perceive His guidance. Ask Him for His assistance on the way of following Christ.
6. Overall, follow his leading and become more of a listening and receiving person than being driven by one's own activity. In this way one can also learn to do the work in a more silent way and to follow the "trail of the day" laid by God.
7. The prayer of the heart can also help us during the day and in our daily work to pray short prayers, which help us to lift our hearts more easily and more often to God. These prayers can always be spoken also during the work etc. They need a time of practice.

All these points can help us to receive a rich way of praying and living already in the forefront of the whole contemplation

Question 2: How can I deny myself?

“Whoever wants to be my disciple, must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.” (Mk 8:34)

By the term self-denial it is meant that by my own decision and with the grace of God I overcome all that stands in the way of the will of God.

This is essential to the way of following Christ, for the discipleship of the Lord means that I want to become like him in everything in order to become perfect like the Father in Heaven.

Not only the sin is hindering us, which separates us from God, but also the many effects of sins, bad habits, many wishes and ideas I have, as far as they do not be in union with the will of God and much more.

Self-denial is part of the daily life of following Christ because my own ideas and the reality in which I live often are not in harmony with God`s will. In the language of mystical teachings this is called the "path of purification", which has both active and passive character. Only when certain purifications are completed and the love for God has grown, then it will be easier to accept all the circumstances that God sends or allows and to discover his love in it.

Specifically, this means learning to be shaped by the Spirit of the Lord day after day.

If I realize that my desire for the things of this world is too great, I have to work to overcome it. When circumstances occur that I have not chosen for myself but are not changeable, I must learn to accept them, despite my inner resistance.

Self-denial means overcoming one's self strive for happiness by our standards, but to find it in the fulfillment of the will of God.

This requires a long journey that goes on until the end of life, because self-love is especially pronounced in our lives. This is due to the fact that our capacity for love is strongly oriented towards one's own ego, which is then turned to God through steps of self-denial. When we realize this, every day is a school of love, and self-denial becomes, over time, also an inner spiritual need for us to grow in love.

However, care must be taken to ensure that unhealthy moments are not mixed with self-denial and to think that any kind of natural joy stands in the way of the imitation of Christ. This can lead to serious distortions.

Therefore, it is important to remember that it is about overcoming disordered love, that is, those things that are too much, that weaken our souls, that are geared to our self-enjoyment, that hold us in dependencies and in disorderly attachments.