



Living from the Inside Out

By Eileen Lombardo

Most of us have had so much time during this pandemic to reflect on how our lives are changing, at least the material part. I have had to reduce TV news to one or two times a day because the animosity expressed whether about the pandemic, racism, or politics was becoming palatable.

However, it did cause me to reflect on how secular humanism has changed to the new religion of politics. If I do not follow the masses and repeat what the media preaches, I run the risk of being ostracized...do we really have freedom of speech and thought or must we all join the "gang" of political correctness, keeping in mind that this new religion of politics comes from the era of secular humanism. God has been removed from generations of what we call our leaders, and especially the educators, of today.

I believe this chaos we are seeing begins in the heart—yes, a heart issue and a moral issue. Politics and law have had no place for morality, so changing laws or putting new ones on the books may be a temporary solution but we need to transform hearts and that is a process I work on with God. Since the fall of Adam and Eve all relationships have been ruptured; ours with God, with each other and even with nature. So, let us begin by first transforming our hearts by growth in our prayer life with the hope of changing the world and ourselves, one minute, one day, one person at a time.

Growth in prayer requires intimacy, friendship with God who when I meditate on the beginning of Genesis, I picture him walking in the cool of the day with all he created and it was good. Sin came to rupture this blessed state and yet still throughout the pages of the Old Testament with its history of sinful, hard hearted humans, there shine “friends of God” who in some measure attained or were granted intimacy with the transcendent mystery. Is such intimacy still possible? Absolutely, and no wooing is necessary. God is love itself and he is always drawing us to his heart. But our heart must be really listening, really wanting the truth, really wanting God. Some of the difficulty is that we don’t really want Him. We want our own version of Him, one we can carry around in our pockets and use like a charm, a key or magic formula. We think of prayer as a special activity, as an art that can be taught, like learning a musical instrument. Prayer is not a technique but a relationship.

Jesus taught us to call God “Abba”, Father. He does not teach us to call God friend, a friend is someone equal in status. As children we are called to dependence and obedience. As our Abba, we can rely on everything the word father implies; unbreakable bond, tender, compassionate, infinitely involved, fatherly/motherly love of God. We must also remember that the Jewish father-son relationship of Jesus’s time, was that the son was considered to have no life or existence of his own, but owed everything to his father. To call God “Abba” is a summons to the most radical self-denial.

To call Jesus our friend means we identify with his living for his Father—this is prayer, this is intimacy with God. Jesus has become our Way, our Truth and our Life because he declined to have any way of his own, any truth or reality of his own, only the Father’s will. We have to learn to live from the well-spring from the Father. How do I do this; we begin by learning our faith, by listening to Jesus in scripture, by studying and absorbing the Beatitudes; and this intellectual knowledge builds the relationship, the ingredients for intimacy and real knowing. God alone sets the fire but the ingredients must be in place. Faith is a decision to take God with utter seriousness as the God of my life. A decision to make Him the center of my life, to make his will my sole concern. Every day I struggle in my attempts to be selfless, to quench some righteous correction of others faults, to become nothing so my God who lives within me can become everything. And so, I pray, Lord give me the grace to complete the work you have begun and to live my life from the inside out and not from the outside in. Amen

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