

## **A Shortcut**

When we listen to the wisdom of the saints, we listen to the words of the spiritual masters who have confidently navigated the pathways of holiness. Therefore, when a saint talks about the shortest way to holiness, my ears prop up.

Listen to what St. Faustina said in her diary:

“My Jesus, it is truly easy to become holy; it just takes a little good will!...Jesus hurries to help that soul; and if the soul is faithful to this grace of God, she can in a short time reach the highest level of holiness that a created being can attain here below...The shortest road is faithfulness to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.”

There is the shortcut! But now the question remains, how do we remain faithful to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit?

When we look at the Acts of the Apostles, we see many stories of the disciples being led by the Holy Spirit. Today we hear of how the Church at Antioch was praying and they understood that Barnabas and Saul were to be set apart by the Holy Spirit for the work they had been called to. It seems like it was not just a hunch, but they knew the mission the Holy Spirit was calling them to. They were faithful to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

They had a real relationship with the Holy Spirit and were confident in their understanding and knowledge of the Holy Spirit. It was a real, living communion and communication. But this still leaves us with the question: how do we remain faithful to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit?

I am reminded again of another great spiritual master, St. Ignatius of Loyola. After St. Ignatius had been injured in battle and a cannonball had shattered his leg, he had to have his leg reset and so he was bedridden for a significant period of time. He asked for some books to read but all they had was a book on the lives of the saints.

As he read the life of St. Dominic and St. Francis his heart was enflamed with love and he experienced a residual peace. Similarly, as he thought about his military exploits and the damsels he would save, he experienced a sense of excitement and joy but there was not a residual peace but a residual disharmony.

Being faithful to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit requires that we are attentive to the workings of our heart. It is like trying to tune your radio dial to the right station. We need to step away from the quiet the surrounding noise so that we can hear whether there is static or beautiful music.

So if we are recollected, if we have periods of silence externally and internally, we will find that we are able to tune into the radio of our hearts and notice the static or the music. Like St. Ignatius we can engage in different actions throughout the day (choices between two goods) and one action could give us an initial sense of closeness to God and then the after effect of that action is a sense of peace or we can engage in other actions which seem to give us a sense of joy but the after effect of that is disquiet.

Sometimes this peace or disquiet can be very subtle. It the difference between a drop of water falling on a sponge or a drop of water falling on a stone. The drop of water on a sponge gives a sense of harmony but the drop of water on a stone gives a very subtle sense of disquiet, disharmony.

So through the experience of St. Ignatius he was able to discern that those movements of the heart that lead to greater residual sense of peace was where the Holy Spirit was moving him to go, moving him to greater freedom, greater love and service for the glory of God.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, in order to be faithful to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, we need to tune into our hearts, to cut out all the interior distractions that prevent us from seeing our hearts clearly. Then we can hear the Holy Spirit acting within the peace of our hearts who is setting us apart for the work he has planned for us and who is leading us along the shortest and surest road to holiness