

Contemplative Outreach Spiritual Journey with Thomas Keating Part 4 Tape 19(a)



Silence is the First Language of God

Characteristic of the Night of Sense is the inclination towards solitude and silence even when you don't find satisfaction there.

The Grace of Pure Faith

The Night of Sense results in greater humility, unwillingness to judge and more awareness of our mixed motivation as faith deepens.

Teresa (The Felt Experience of God's Presence): Infused Recollection; Prayer of Quiet; Prayer of Union; Prayer of Full Union.

Infused Recollection: One feels the presence of grace not from the senses but from our deepest Self, God within. (*Teresa's discursive meditation*)

The Prayer of Quiet: As grace deepens the will is absorbed in God though the imagination and memory remain undisciplined persecutors. (*Centering: Teresa says many reach this but few get beyond*)

Prayer of Full Union: When even the imagination and the memory become still and all the faculties are resting in God, along with awareness of the Presence of God and with no self-reflection, this is Full Union. (*Teresa actually describes the Prayer of Union in these terms and the Prayer of Full Union is said to be a state when the senses are so occupied with joy that they cannot experience any other interior or exterior thing.*)

John of the Cross describes a parallel path to the Felt Experience of God's Presence (contemplation) and that is the Path of Pure Faith.

This path is a path up the back stairs, as it were and both paths lead to Transforming Union. This hidden path is experienced not as a felt experience but as a restructuring of consciousness. "Hence what is most valuable, then, is the practice itself, not the psychological content. And it people could only grasp that truth, it would make the spiritual journey so much easier."

The False Self is Still Present

Further purification is needed and so the Night of the Spirit follows as the false self actually transfers its desire for satisfaction to the spiritual journey itself as the love of God invites us to review our childish emotional judgements and accept in gratitude ourselves, the circumstances we find ourselves in, others and the cosmos.

Felt Experiences are not necessary to be Contemplative.

N.B. Words in italics are my own interpretation of Teresa and not that of Thomas Keating.