

Hearing! Happening! Hoping! • Courage to Read ...

1 *The Theological-Spiritual Horizon*

HHH is a reading of a biblical text in the hope of meeting God! Meeting God is something that happens in our lives. God is already in our lives, so what we're really doing is *discovering* THE ONE who is already there.

The start, middle, and end of the spiritual journey is the conviction that God is always present. As we progress on the journey, God is more and more present to us.

Thomas Keating (ed.), *The Divine Indwelling: Centering Prayer and its Development* (New York: Lantern Books, 2001), 2.

The Trinity is present within us as the source of our being on every level. Each level of life from the most physical to the most spiritual is sustained by the divine presence. To [celebrate the] Liturgy or to pray while thinking that God is absent will prevent us from relating properly to the divine presence. (ibid., 3)

2 *A Lesson from Life—the Need and the Confidence to Cook!*

- Prepare!
- Taste!
- Give!

3 *Let's Take a (Challenging) Gospel Text*

Matthew 5:38-48 (Sunday 7/B)

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘You have learnt how it was said, *eye for eye and tooth for tooth*.

But I say this to you, offer the wicked person no resistance.

On the contrary,

if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer them the other as well:

if someone takes you to law, and would have your tunic,

let them have your cloak as well.

And if anyone orders you to go one mile, go two miles with them.

Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

‘You have learnt how it was said:

You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.

But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

In this way you will be children of your Father in heaven,

for he causes his sun to rise on the wicked as well as the good,

and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest alike.

For if you love those who love you, what right have you to claim any credit? Even the tax collectors do as much, do they not?

And if you save your greetings for your brothers and sisters,

are you doing anything exceptional?

Even the Gentiles do as much, do they not?

You must therefore be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.’

4 *Preparing—Asking for the Spirit to Open our Ears and our Hearts*

God our Father, source of all light

you have sent your Son into the world,

to reveal yourself to all your children.

Send your Spirit upon us now

that we may meet Jesus in the Word that comes from you.

May we come to know him,

may we come to love him more deeply

and so be drawn closer to the blessedness of your Kingdom. Amen.

5 THREE MOVEMENTS

5.1 Hearing Attending to the text ... words, characters, mood, atmosphere ... so we

read and re-read the text. The important points are highlighted, the events, the words, the characters involved, the emotions, the circumstances, the unfolding of the action. This careful exploration results in many surprising discoveries as we get to know the text. (Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini)

5.2 Happening Attending to life ... to the world ...

In the light of Christ which *flows* from the text, we read the passage anew and we ask *where does this happen in our lives, in our parish, in our country, across the world?*

The only question is whether we will open ourselves to meeting [the Lord in the text]. We can go further and say that every Bible passage cannot merely touch us but can do so very deeply. Much of our reading remains on the surface both of the passage *and of ourselves*. When we have [read well], we have the feeling that the passage was written especially for us and that our whole lives are in it.

Michel de Verteuil CSSp, *Your Word is a Light for my Steps* (Dublin: Veritas 1996), 20–21

5.3 Hoping Attending to the Lord ... resting in what God is ALREADY doing in the world

In the light of what happens in our world, we turn to the Lord of all and speak to him about what we see, about what we realize.

Our words *flow spontaneously*; that which is genuine cannot be forced. Our lives, our world in the hands the One who has called us out of nothingness into his own marvelous light.

6 Gathering the Word and our Word(s)

We rest in what God is doing in our lives and in the world. We repeat a word or a phrase that captures the flavour or the life of the passage for us. We gather our prayer in the great prayer of Jesus, with its HOPE in the faithfulness of his and our Father...

Some Touchstones

- “Expressions” to avoid: • “Should” • “Message”
- To pray the Scriptures ...

is not only a means of discovering something about God; it also helps us to understand our hidden selves. It is not the alienating absorption of a message that is foreign or even hostile to our deepest aspirations; it is the surprising conclusion that our most authentic level of being is mirrored in the Scriptures. What is most intimate to our existence as persons is nourished and nurtured by God’s word.

Michael Casey OCSO, *Sacred Reading* (Ligouri, Missouri: Triumph Books, 1996), 30.

- What’s at stake ...

The secret of the success of this venture [*The School of the Word*] lies in the fact that we do not offer the young people a catechism lesson or even a homily but rather the necessary means for them to put themselves face to face with the text.

Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini at the Gregorian University, Rome on December 13, 1990

- Our “Daily Bread”...

No human being can pay full attention to the words that he or she is praying every single day, and apparently that is how God would have it. Sometimes, particularly at crisis points in our lives, we feel these words with our whole heart. They seem to burn in our chests and bring tears to our eyes.

Kathleen Norris, *The Quotidian Mysteries* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1998), 81.