Handouts for October 22, 2013 Administrator’s Dialogue Louisville, KY

Pat Livingston

Session: Deepening Spirituality in Our Lives

Three handouts – the first two can be printed back to back

**Deepening Our Spirituality: Embracing the Scripture of Our Own Lives**

Reflection:

After the conference, you might take some time to consider your own story of challenges and difficulties, what they have revealed as the scripture of God’s love in your life.

What has been your experience of blessing in the messiness of life?

Have there been times when creation came out of chaos?

Has there been some external outcome,

some internal growth,

some experience of not being alone?

If you want to, choose one example of difficulty in the last year that can help you see the holiness of your own struggles, how you have been open to God’s Love.

Let yourself feel how precious you are to God as you make your courageous way on the human journey, following Jesus in the Paschal Mystery itself that leads us to new life.

For sharing after the break:

What is one thing that sustains and strengthens you spiritually?

Is there a kind of prayer,

a reading from scripture,

an activity you do,

people you get together with,

a place you go,

a memory of blessing?

some other source of strength?

“The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom need I fear?

The Lord is the fortress of my life, of whom should I be afraid?”

(Psalm 27)

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“Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you,

I have called you by name, you are mine…

You are precious in my eyes…

You are honored and I love you.”

(Isaiah 43: 2, 4)

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“I know the plans I have in mind for you - it is the Lord who speaks – plans for your welfare, not your woe, reserving a future full of hope for you. Then, when you call me, I will listen to you. When you see me, you will find me, when you seek me with all your heart.”

(Jeremiah 29: 11-13)

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“I am the vine, you are the branches. …As the Father has loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love….I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete.

(John 15: 5a,9,11

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Rejoice in the Lord always, I say it again, rejoice!...the Lord is near….

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things….Then the God of peace will be with you.

(Philippians 4: 4,5b,8, 9b)

**Deepening Our Joy**

For your reflection after the conference:

“Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God.” Leon Bloy

“Knowing how to receive and remember goodness is, in fact, the best way to prepare for trusting when goodness seems absent.”

Demetrius Dumm, OSB *Praying the Scriptures*

How do you protect the most infallible sign of the presence of God?

What helps you focus on goodness?

Could you consider focusing on goodness by making a list – adding to it over the days and weeks – of things you are grateful for?

Would it appeal to you to begin a practice of sharing One Good Thing? When you get together with family or friends, telling each other one good thing that has happened that day or since the last time you were together. Then perhaps saying a prayer of thanksgiving together if they are people comfortable with prayer.

Is there a kind of prayer that you look forward to, that really makes a difference to you? Could you deepen your joy by making more time for that prayer?

Would it appeal to you to look for experiences of goodness in your day, pause and do a simple breath prayer? Breathing in God’s loving presence, breathing out gratitude?

Could you increase your awareness of kindness? A very important insight is that whether we are the one giving or the one receiving, we meet in the kindness and bless each other. Could you look for ways not only to give, but to really graciously receive kindness?

Sacrifice means “to make holy.” Is there some kind of difficulty or pain in your life at this time that you could consider “offering up”? Making it holy, joining in the work of redemption. (Pope John Paul II *– The Christian Meaning of Human Suffering).*

We deepen our joy by telling Easter stories – the times God brought life from what seemed to be death. Do you have an Easter story you could share ?

For more: see Pat Livingston’s book ***Let in the Light*** Sorin Books (Ave Maria Press) Notre Dame IN