



From Silence to Service

by Susan Muto

Flowing from contemplation and all that readies us for this gift is the life of dedicated, Christlike service. If service is insufficiently rooted in contemplative presence, it may lead to arrogance and activism out of touch with our original intention. We work to attain our own success with little consideration for what God may be asking of us.

Our projects need to be rooted in contemplation. In stillness, we can listen to God's directives and do our best to execute them gently but firmly in the given situation. Whether we succeed or fail is not the point. What counts for God is our willingness to try. Contemplation enables us to be serenely present in the world, doing what we can, without succumbing to the ways of the world. We remain rooted in the love of God while going forth in labors for the kingdom.

This rhythm of recollection and participation is an essential feature of Christian commitment. Whatever we happen to be doing – cooking a meal, writing a letter, teaching a class, nursing the sick – we do out of love for God and a desire to make this love manifest. We want to help others see his face in every person, event, and thing. This is what it means as Christians to be missioned. Missionary duty is not limited to evangelizing work in foreign lands. It is what we are to do every day in our homes and professions. Whether we are involved in teaching, law, nursing, medicine, or social work, whatever our position or profession, we have to remain faithful disciples despite daily pressures...

If Christianity is a religion of the word, read carefully and reflected upon, it is also an invitation to work hard for the betterment of the world. We must go into the desert with Jesus, knowing all the while that the test of our relationship will come when we walk with him on the dusty road. Our meeting with him in silence is but the beginning of a lifelong response to being missioned. As he tells us at the end of the Gospel of St. Mark, "Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation" (Mk. 16:16).

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