

Homily for Saturday of the 19th Week of Ordinary Time / 18 August 2018

(Mt19:13-15) Given the rarity of mystical contemplation in every time and place, some authors used to propose two separate ways to holiness: the mystical way, which was supposedly for the chosen few, and the ascetical way, which was open to the great multitude of believers. Vatican II, however, stated that the call to holiness is universal. Everyone is called to mystical contemplation. Asceticism in turn is the only pathway leading there. But our ascetical efforts won't be rewarded with contemplative prayer unless we're intent on detaching ourselves perfectly from all that this life has to offer. In today's world, which fosters addictions of every kind, perfect detachment seems impossible given our human weakness. Who can teach us the secret to a perfectly detached love of creatures?

"Let the children come to me," said Jesus, "and do not prevent them; for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." For children, the pleasures of the flesh mean nothing; nor does money as yet have any hold on them. All children need is their parents' tender love and attention. In this, children reveal to us adults the twofold secret to holiness of life, namely: a tenacious devotion to our heavenly parents and a perfect detachment from everything else that this world has to offer. At our baptism, we became members of Jesus' Mystical Body, wherein hand and Head – disciple and Master – have one and the same Father and mother. At baptism, Jesus' parents became ours as well. It was then that God became our Father and Mary became our mother. No one wrote more clearly about childlike devotion to God, our Father, than Saint Thérèse of Lisieux in her autobiography. No one wrote more clearly about childlike devotion to Mary, our mother, than St. Louis de Montfort in His 'True Devotion.' Their respective shortcuts are two sides of one and the same coin, namely: spiritual childhood, which Jesus recommended so highly in the gospel, even promising that, "the kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these."

So much for our tenacious devotion to God and Mary, what about perfect detachment from everything else that the world has to offer? – Well, devotion and detachment are also two sides of the same coin. When a child is deprived of his parents' presence, he becomes homesick. Regardless of our vocation – whether we belong to the hierarchy or the laity – we Christians are all called to be homesick for heaven. A truly homesick child thinks of nothing but his parents. His attention cannot be distracted from them by anything this world has to offer. Nothing will console the homesick child except the sight of his parents. Nothing on this earth must console us except the sight of our parents in heaven: God and Mary. Provided we have a tender love for them, we'll turn our nose up at all the world's pleasures. So be it! Amen!