

PRAXIS: FIGHTING FIRE WITH FIRE — THE FIRE OF DESIRE (9/25/16)

(Ezekiel 18:32 — “Get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!”)

Opening Prayer of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus (NB: Saint Joseph added)

Merciful Father,
in the name of our lovable Jesus,
of the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph,
and of the Saints,
**I ASK YOU TO SET ME ON FIRE
WITH YOUR SPIRIT OF LOVE**
and grant me the grace
of making You deeply loved. Amen.

PRAXIS

I. THE PREFERENCE TEST (Father Richard Veras)

Answer the following questions from your own experience. Please answer sincerely.

PLEASE NOTE: You are not being asked which possibility you think is true, or which you believe, but which **YOU WOULD PREFER**, whether or not you think it is true or believe it. Which do you prefer? (Circle either A or B to indicate your preference of the two options.)

CHOICE 1

- A. When people you love die, they are dead and that's it. You will never see them again.
- B. When people you love die, they somehow live on, and you have the possibility of seeing them again, because when you die, you will also somehow live on.

CHOICE 2

- A. Your desire for happiness will find an answer. You will desire more and be given more, and you are promised that this will go on forever.
- B. Your desire for happiness will last for your biological life; it might be answered sometimes, but it will die when your life ends.

CHOICE 3

- A. You are loved.
- B. You are not loved.

CHOICE 4

- A. There is a God who created all of reality and who loves you like a Father and who wants you to exist.
- B. Life is accidental, outside of what you see and touch; there is Nothing that cares if you exist.

CHOICE 5

- A. Your value depends on your abilities. The greater your abilities are, the more important you are. You are more important than people who can't do as much or as well as you. People who have greater abilities than you are more valuable and more important than you. When you lose your abilities, your value will diminish.

- B. Your value comes from the fact that there is a God who wants you to exist. So even when your abilities are not the best, and when other people don't think you are important, He still loves and values you. Thus, you are always of infinite value.

CHOICE 6

- A. God exists, true love exists, but in this life He, and His love, can never be known.
B. God exists, true love exists; God and His love can be known and experienced in this life.

CHOICE 7

- A. Your existence is summed up in your biology. Everything about you is dictated by your physical and chemical makeup. There is nothing about you that science, at some point, will not be able to figure out, and perhaps even reproduce.
B. Beyond your biology, there is something about you that is mysterious and could never be subject to any analysis. Your existence is irreducible to any measure because something at the core of your being is somehow connected to the infinite, i.e., you are ultimately immeasurable.

CHOICE 8

- A. This test is easy.
B. This test is hard.

II. The Fire of Holy Desire — “Buying In” and Beginning Again and Again

- A. Desire — “To wish or long for the possession or enjoyment of something that a person’s appetite does not presently have.” (All definitions from *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.)
1. Natural
2. Supernatural (Inspired by Divine grace)
B. Desire of Beatitude — “The natural desire for perfect happiness.”
1. Universal
2. Unavoidable
3. Irresistible
C. Hope — “The confident desire of obtaining a future good that is difficult to attain.”
D. Virtue of Hope — “An infused theological virtue, received at Baptism together with sanctifying grace and having the possession of God as its primary object.”
E. Devotion — “The disposition of will to do promptly what concerns the worship and service of God.”

QUESTIONS

- I. Why was the Preference Test easy or hard for you?
II. What possible stumbling blocks do I and people in general encounter on a daily basis that may diminish or even destroy the desire for God?

- III. What means do I have to promote increased desire for God in myself and those around me?

MISSION

- I. Morning: Prayer of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus
- II. Mental Prayer: 5/5/5 (children) or 10/10/10 (teen/adult)
 - A. Gospel of the Day or Any Passages from Scripture
 - B. Stories or Writings of Saints
 - C. Passages from Theological or Catechetical Writings
 - D. Particular Decades of the Rosary
 - E. Visual Images
- III. Examination of Conscience followed by an Act of Contrition: Did I Live According to The Practice of the Presence of God?
 - A. When I arose this morning, was I aware of God and did I sincerely offer my day to Him? Did I entrust my greatest joys and fears to Him, inviting Him to join me in what I find enjoyable and to help me in what I find difficult or even dreadful?
 - B. Did I practice being aware of the Presence of God in each activity of the day? In what places and during what activities do I tend to ignore Him or to fear that He is not available?
 - C. When I fell in weakness or sin during the day, did I turn to God in my mind and heart, tell Him I was sorry, and re-dedicate myself to following Him and to remaining aware of His Presence and assistance?
 - D. What must I ask of God to help me do better tomorrow?