

## Lukewarmness

I felt compelled to choose this topic as I have felt myself guilty of lukewarmness, and maybe you have also. I was surprised at some of the facts that I found in the book, *Lukewarmness: The Devil in Disguise*, by Francis Fernandez Carvajal.

First, maybe, like me, you thought lukewarmness was that you were not on fire in your faith?! Of course, this can mean many different things for different people. I was surprised that lukewarmness is really a lack of forgiveness of some offense or lack of frequenting the sacraments, especially confession. So, 77 times 7 we must forgive! Everything and everyone. God calls us to Him, but we must hear Him and forgive from the heart.

God always forgives, but it is up to us to repent! Lukewarmness is really what holds us back from our full joy with Christ. Our life is a pilgrimage to God. Our frailties hold us back, but with Christ all is possible. We will have many victories if our gaze is on Christ and His mother. We must examine our conscience every day to begin again on our pilgrimage. Repentance and conversion require us to be able to recognize our sin and not justify or ignore it, which pulls us away from Christ. The prodigal son was able to return to his father once he had this self-knowledge of his sin. He realized that his father loved him always and awaited his return. This self-knowledge and honest recognition of sin becomes evident to us through frequent examination of conscience. Through this exercise we are comparing our conduct with what God expects of us in His 10 Commandments. God provides the light to our soul in His mercy. Without this realization our soul would remain in darkness. There would be no self-knowledge and no means for recovery. If we are lazy about our sin, our faults will take root in the soul, and we will become "lukewarm." I am guilty of this! We must always put ourselves in the presence of God.

Pride prevents us from seeing who we are. The scribes and pharisees were deaf and blind deliberately because deep down they were not willing to change in their hearts. They wanted to be seen for all that they did instead of being alone in prayer, in secret, with God, Who sees the heart of hearts in humility and honesty. We should have sorrow for love of God.

When Christ is present in the soul, everything takes on fuller meaning. Christ brightens our earthly existence and gives us strength. Our friendship with Christ deepens. We did not come into this world for a good time or to accumulate things or wealth. God wants us to fulfill His will. We live to love, honor, and serve God in this world and to be happy with Him forever in Heaven. Sometimes this simple *Catechism* fact that I taught my children eludes me! I need to slow down and live the simplicity of this fact.

The soul is corrupted by hatred, quarrels, bitterness, impurity, and egoism which equates to lukewarmness. Interior degeneration is likened to being old prematurely. We must love and have friendship with Christ, which is the opposite of lukewarmness. St. Gregory the Great says, "The negligent soul suffers from hunger because it wastes its energies on base desires rather than aspiring to the highest goods. Because it does not discipline itself, the soul feels greatly attracted to pleasures."

Keep life simple! Frequent the sacraments, and you will know and love Christ. Forgive, forgive, forgive. Examine, examine, examine. LOVE.