

The Father's Heart for Me

Do the "Jesus Baptism" meditation first...

Testimony about my experience with this meditation

As I heard the words "You are my beloved Son, with you I am well pleased", this is what raced through my mind:

- that's a lie
- you're not perfect, God doesn't really love me
- anger and resentment
- unworthiness
- you're stupid
- shame
- you're a terrible dad
- profound sadness
- hopelessness and despair

Overwhelming emotions, overwhelming lies
Overwhelming spirits not of the Lord welling up

I wanted to hide, I wanted to left alone...
"Julie, I'll be waiting in the lobby..."

The priest acknowledged that some of us probably experienced these things, and that those who did were going to be prayed with

Dang it! I can't get out! I'm trapped.

So now I'm going to get prayer, and I relate the above emotions

I'm asked... do I need to forgive anyone?

My dad... though honestly it feels like I've done this many times
Myself, for feeling like I've passed this all on to my own kids, but again it feels like I've done that before.

I'm asked if I'm willing to take responsibility and repent for my part in this

The prayer team leads me in a very simple, straightforward prayer.

Jesus, I believe in you and surrender my life to you once again. Forgive me.

I forgive my dad for...

I forgive myself for ...

I take responsibility for the ways I reacted to certain situations in my life

I repeat after the leader

In the name of Jesus, I renounce the lie that I am unworthy of your love

In the name of Jesus, I renounce the spirit of anger

and continue on with these

And then the leader says

In the name of Jesus, I break the power of every lie and spirit that ...

and they say my name.

Now the prayer leader only knows my name as "Mike", but she proceeds...

*In the name of Jesus, I break the power of every lie and spirit that **MICHAEL** has renounced, and I command it to go right now.*

POW! Just a flash flood of love poured into my heart

Holy Spirit Power! Supernatural. Charismatic... a wave of freedom... healing

Hearing my name

My Heavenly Father KNOWS me

My Heavenly Father LOVES me

And the leader prayed a blessing of our Heavenly Father upon me.

And in an instant, by supernatural grace in the Name Of Jesus Christ

I had been created anew in some way...

The BSC Rule tells us that "All that matters is that one be created anew" through the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ

Note that the Rule says "be created anew", not "create yourself anew".

In this simple prayer, I simply cooperated with the Spirit of God, and I recreated.

A real miracle. A real healing.

Our founder teaches that our integration of Charismatic and Contemplative spirituality is likened to a torrential downpour vs a gentle soaking rain, or a roaring bonfire vs hot coals

In my case, the Holy Spirit washed clean my woundedness in a torrential flood of grace. He burnt away these lies in my life with a searing blow torch of love.

All this, paving the way for the disciplines we embrace like simplicity and silence and solitude and penance to more deeply soak in to nourish and fire the primary charism to which I am called: Love.

I will not stand here and say my life is now perfect.

In fact, my wife will attest to a recent event which the Evil One was trying to make me doubt all the work God is doing in me.

I still see many layers of "me the imperfect onion to peel" as I am continually created anew. But I am somehow closer to being who I am called to be.

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Lately, my eyes are being opened to the fact that I have an identity crisis!

So frequently, either I don't know or I forget or I deny or I run-away from who I am called to be!

I intellectually know from the catechesis in my head who am, but I don't REALLY "know" in my heart

(point to monstrance)

But this heart knows...

This is my Father's heart for me, right here

This is Jesus Christ, the Son of God

Jn 14:9 "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." Jesus says.

Our BSC Way of Life puts it this way:

"At the root and center of all that we are on earth, we seek the divine love of Jesus Christ, our Lover and our Lord, who leads us to the Father under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the gospels, which serve as our primary rule of life."

Galatians 4:4-7 "When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir."

This IS the good news of the gospel!

In Jesus, I am an adopted Son. My heart yearns to cry out Daddy! Father! And my Father desires for me to have everything he has for me.

Jn 14:20 Jesus says: "I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you."

I am invited to accept Jesus not only as Savior and Lord, but also as the Son of God. It means living in the Sonship of Jesus Christ.

We're invited to stand "in Jesus", and in doing so, receive the Father's love for the Son.

In Jesus we see a person who knows...

- his identity - Beloved Son of God the Father
- his destiny - sitting at the right hand, reigning in the house of the Father
- his purpose - selfless love... healing, proclaiming liberty, bringing freedom through death and resurrection, bringing us to the Father's house

Benedict XVI - "Because Jesus is the Son, he has an unceasing vision of the Father. Because Jesus is man, we can share *this vision*."

What do we see for ourselves, through Jesus, in this vision of the Father?

- identity - beloved son or daughter of God the Father
- destiny - invitation to be "in" the Trinity - eternal life in the Father's house
- purpose - selfless love... through Jesus, bringing healing and freedom, freely sacrificing myself so that others may believe and live in the Father's house

This is only possible because of the Rule that you and I profess and hold dear... the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are **baptized into Christ's death** so we might share in His life.

In Jesus, we see who we are to be!

In Jesus, we can be created anew into who we are to be!

And now, the \$64,000 question

Why do I struggle with truly knowing and believing this?!?!

Our BSC Way of Life tells us:

True love of self is based on the Love of God who has created us in his own image. That image has been obscured by sin...

Take well-known account of Jesus being directly tempted to sin

Temptations in the desert (Mt 4)

"Command these stones to become loaves of bread"

"Throw yourself down"

"All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me"

Fr Steve will talk more about our own sinfulness and his Gospel reading and the first reading of the fall of Adam and Eve during his homily tomorrow at Mass.

And an account of where Jesus could have been affected by someone else's sin

Mt 16:21-23

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men."

In the same way, the Evil One uses the effects of others sinfulness to try and keep us from living as the image of God we are intended to be.

One way he attacks is through the shortcomings of our earthly father and mother, and how that can compromise how we see God the Father, and thereby how we see ourselves:

- some of us may have been harmed by our earthly father
- all of us experienced times when our earthly father fell short and didn't give us the love and blessing we needed
- Because of our fallen nature, NO dad is capable of giving his child everything that he or she needs
- and NO child is capable of receiving all the love and good that a dad does try to give.

I've been realizing over the past years that I've allowed myself to be bound up by things that happened in my childhood, and because of my poor responses to those things long ago, lies are deeply-rooted and I've relied on patterns of sin to cope.

I think I've spent a good part of my life unknowingly allowing myself to be a victim in some ways.

Here's why this is crucially important: self-sacrifice is intertwined with self love.

Our rule tells us that our primary charism is love

Our Way of Life tells us that "you cannot sacrifice what you do not first possess" and that "Love is most fully manifested in the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ"

And here is the heart of the Good News

Let me finish what the Way Of Life says about being created in God's image:

*True love of self is based on the love of God who created us in his own image. That image has been obscured by sin, but the image remains, and is restored once we are cleansed from sin **in Christ**.*

Cleansed from sin **in Christ**

Cleansed from my own sin **in Christ**

Cleansed of the effects of other's sin **in Christ**

Cleansed of all the lies and patterns of sin **in Christ**

Truly knowing my Father **in Christ**

Truly knowing who I am created to be **in Christ**

And then our Way of Life goes on to emphasize that **true self-sacrifice brings even greater fulfillment than that!**

Jesus says "He who loses his life for my sake and the sake of the gospel will come to find it."

I am made free to be united with Jesus on the Cross.

The paradox of the cross is the ultimate fulfillment of self through selfless love. (say it with me)

In Christ, I do not have to be a victim.

In Christ, I do not have to despair.

In Christ, I do not have to wallow in condemnation or unworthiness, because the heart of the Good News is my heavenly Father's heart for me.

The heart of the Good News is JESUS!

In the name of Jesus...

... I forgive my dad for whatever was lacking in his love

... I forgive myself for not fully receiving the love and blessing my dad did give

... I forgive myself for whatever ways I was not enough for my own kids

... I reject the lie that I have to earn God's love, and announce the truth that the Father freely loves me just because I exist!

... I reject the lie that I am unworthy of God's love, and announce the truth I am worthy in the blood of Jesus!

... I reject the lie that I have to be perfect, and announce the truth that I am saved and redeemed by God's grace!

... I reject the lie that I'm hopelessly stuck, and announce the truth that all things are possible with God!

... I reject the lie that I'm stupid, and announce the truth that I am wonderfully created in my Father's image!

... I reject the lie that I'm a victim, and announce the truth that I have been set free to embrace the Cross of Jesus Christ!

... I reject the lie that I've been a terrible dad to my own children, and announce the truth that my Father can make all things new in this very moment!

... I renounce the spirits of anger and resentment

... I renounce the spirits of despair and depression

... I renounce the spirit of condemnation

... I renounce the spirit of unworthiness

... I renounce the spirit of shame

In the name of Jesus, I break the power of every lie and spirit that I have renounced, and any related lies and spirits, and command them to leave right now!

And then the Father's blessing... Blessing means "good words"

Our Father's blessing demolishes the work of the Evil One and reclaims the truth of my life...

The truth that I am His son.

These are the good words my Father speaks to me

As I stand in Jesus, I receive the words that Jesus received at his conception

"He will be called the Son of the Most High" (Lk 1)

As I stand in Jesus, I receive the words that Jesus' mother received for her child

"Blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Lk 1)

As I stand in Jesus, I receive the words that Jesus received at his presentation

"Behold, this child is chosen..." (Lk 2)

As I stand in Jesus, I receive the words that Jesus received at his baptism and the transfiguration

"You are my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Mk 1, Mt 17)

Thank you Father - I am yours, and you are mine.

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So that's my testimony. I ask you...

What's stirring in your heart?

What came to focus during our guided meditation earlier?

What do you want Jesus to do in your life right now?

Let's take a moment and ask Jesus what he wants to reveal to us...

(Prayer teams and Confession...)