

The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor

The Grace of Receptivity in Desert Times

Talk by Stephanie Rosensteel, 12/10/22

Scriptures, Quotes and Questions for further reflection

Scriptures for Inspiration

Psalm 34	Lamentations 3:21-26
Isaiah 30:18-21	Luke 1:46-55
Isaiah 43:1-22	Romans 10:11-13
Jeremiah 31:2-3	1 John 4:18

Quotes

Catechism of the Spiritual Life, Robert Cardinal Sarah

Pages 3-4

Conversion is, in fact, a lifelong task. To convert is to turn away from the futile, toxic things that hold us prisoner so as to turn toward God; but what must we turn away from, and where is God waiting for us? Scripture gives us the answer when it tells us how God led His Chosen People out of servitude so as to bring them into the Promised Land.

When God, moved by compassion, decided to snatch His people away from the violence of slavery and from misery by leading them out of Egypt, it was not to make their life comfortable and carefree but to bring them into the desert, so that they might experience poverty there: austerity, renunciation, solitude, silence, the struggle against self and against Satan, who enslaves us to the world and to money. We learn to be attentive to God precisely in poverty, austerity, and silence because there we discover that we need Him. The desert hollows out emptiness, thirst, and silence in man and thus prepares him to listen to God and His law. The desert is this extraordinary place, far from the dizzying onslaught of communication and the news media, where one can experience a deep, mystical encounter with God that transforms and transfigures...

The desert is full of God; its immensity and simplicity reveal Him; its silence yields Him.

Jesus, The Word to Be Spoken: Prayers and Meditations for Every Day of the Year, Mother Teresa

Pages 103-104

When our Lord wanted this work among the poor, he expressly asked for the poverty of the cross. Our Lord on the cross possessed nothing. He was on the cross, which was given by Pilate. The nails and the crown were given by the soldiers. He was naked when he died; cross, nails, and crown were taken away from him and he was wrapped in a shroud given by a kind heart and buried in a tomb which was not his. Yet Jesus need not have done all this. He could have died as a king and he could have risen from the dead as a king. He chose poverty because he knew in his infinite knowledge and wisdom that it is the real means of possessing God, of conquering his heart, of bringing his love down to this earth.

Lifelines/Sources of Grace in the Desert

Sacraments

- Eucharist – going to Sunday Mass, consider adding 1 or more daily Masses if possible
- Eucharistic Adoration – commit to a time every week, it can be 15 minutes, 30 minutes, an hour, whatever is possible for you.
- Confession – consider what regular confession could look like for you

Prayer

- Rosary – if you are just getting started, begin with 1 decade a day. Consider the Scriptural rosary or an intercessory rosary.
- Lectio Divina – many resources online; begin small, with the Gospel of the day. Read the Scripture, imagine yourself there, speak to Jesus about it.
- Music – music can be a very helpful aid to prayer for many, whether it's listening or making your own music
- Communal – share with and pray with trusted friends, organize a regular meeting time

Questions for Reflection

1. What is, or has been, a desert time in your life? In personal prayer or in your journal, describe this time, be honest about your experience and your feelings. Describe your poverty in this situation. What do you want/need from God in this time? This is your “cry of the poor.”
2. Remember a time or times in your life when you have felt God's presence and consolation. Describe your experience, and feelings. How did you experience God providing for you or answering your prayers. Thank Him for this time.
3. Reflecting on your experience of the desert, and your experiences of God's presence and consolation, what might be the grace that God is offering to you through your time in the desert?
4. Consider sources of grace that you have relied on in the past – liturgy, community, prayer. Which of these do you feel you can incorporate into your life to sustain you in the desert? Or do you need to find a new source of grace? How can you make a place in your daily life to be sustained by this lifeline of grace. Be specific.