On the Spiritual Life - Fr D. Ava Moses

Spiritual Life & Salvation

- The Spiritual Life is defined by the goal of preserving the image and likeness of God that has been implanted in us by thinking good and doing good
  - What is the Image and Likeness of God
    - We are initially created in God's image and likeness
    - God's image and likeness means possessing some Divine Attributes
      - Rationality, wisdom, free-will, goodness/holiness/righteousness, freedom from sin, sonship by adoption, authority, incorruption and indestructibility, immortality, godhood
      - We are given God's rationality and His wisdom, and then free-will to be able to use it, and then goodness/holiness/righteousness so that our use for it is good, and this is what separates us from sin. We are adopted into the royal family, which gives us authority over the creation; so creation cannot harm us, thus we are immortal.
      - Love
        - Also called purity of heart
        - We can also call Love a goal of the spiritual life
    - Partaking/Participation is the process by which we receive those Divine Attributes
  - God's Image and Likeness was lost in Adam and Eve when they disobeyed
  - God wants His image and likeness to be restored in humans
- Regaining or Restoring that which was lost is the definition of salvation (safe, protected, made whole)
- Salvation occurs in phases
  - Our life on earth
  - Our eternal life after Resurrection
- Partaking/Participation is the means by which we can begin to have God's Image and Likeness restored within Us and work with Him to preserve it (during our life on earth). It won't be complete until after the Resurrection
  - Passively
    - Divine withdrawal of grace
    - Salvific works of grace
      - Incarnation, Christ's Baptism/Anointing, Obedience and Submission of Christ, Proclamation of Jesus as the Beloved Son of the Father, Christ's sufferings and crucifixion, His Death, His Resurrection, His Ascension, The Giving of the Holy Spirit.
  - Actively (Sacramental Life)

    - Baptism
    - Chrismation
    - Eucharist
    - Repentance and Confession
        - Acts of Love
        - Contemplating the Holy Trinity
        - Prayer

Spirituality

1. A Balance Between Labors and Sinless Leisure Time is NECESSARY
2. Balance and Moderation to Regulate Spiritual Activities
    1. Discernment is needed
    2. Spiritual Life is built around abilities
3. Orthodox Spirituality **Requires** Conscious Purpose of Mind
4. Pursuing the Restoration of God's Image and Likeness within us, or Purity of Heart, is to be the motive behind all our actions
    - Things that we don't like or that annoy us, should be welcome to cultivate purity of heart
        - E.g. How do I deal with annoying situation? 1 - I flee; 2 Timothy 2:22; 2 - I stay and crash out; 3 - I stay and learn to keep my composure so that I grow. (Refined by fire)
        - Categories of sin: Enjoyable (Lust, Vainglory, etc.) - Unenjoyable (Anger, frustration, etc.)
    - Even some ascetic and spiritual exercises can cause harm
        - e.g. Pharisees and fasting
        - Focus on quality of ascetic exercises
        - Ascetic exercises do not have any value of themselves, but derive their value from the ability to cultivate purity of heart
        - If anyone loves, this one is known by God
            - If I know everything but I have not love…
5. There are varying degrees in the spiritual life
    1. Exercise yourself towards godliness
6. Sometimes, One will be called away from a good pursuit and the intensity to pursuit it by God for a good reason
    1. The Lord may allow a demon ("messenger of Satan") to attack us in order that we can avoid vainglory, or pride. Or some other good reason (see 2 Cor 12:7-9)
    2. "I'm a very patient person" - no you're not. And I'll put you in a hard situation to show you that you aren't patient… because if you don't know you're impatient, then you can't confess it or grow out of it.

Revision #3
Created 2025-10-20 07:11:06 UTC by Fr.Maximus Wahba
Updated 2025-10-20 23:43:38 UTC by Fr.Maximus Wahba