

Reflections On The Journey: Renewing Our Spirits to Do the Work

Tending to our spirits was the primary ‘work’ of our ACLS Houston meeting. Eileen Burke-Sullivan led this time of reflection through a series of presentations, followed by time for prayer and sharing. Eileen helped and challenged each one present to reflect on the paschal mystery, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in light of the dominant cultural paradigm operative in the United States. It is in recognizing the *realidad*, that is, the contextual sense of culture and faith that binds our lives, that we experience the grace of God. What does it mean to die? What does it mean for God to promise a new life? Consideration of these formative questions led us to begin to identify the false gods we worship (e.g. money, fear, reputation) and then to be intent on giving our days, weeks and future to God as we live anew knowing that we are not god but rather God is God.



Eileen suggested that we live this out by “reading” three books identified by monastic communities. First, read the Book of Holy Scripture (The Bible) for at least 15 minutes a day. Second, read the Book of Nature to observe the cycle of death and resurrection present in God’s creation. Third, read the Book of Life by examining our hearts and how we have lived each day.

Four virtues were suggested as essential to the Christian life:

Justice Being the presence of Christ and utterly available to the world.

Fidelity Faithfully growing in relationship with God and family and moving out to others.

Self-Love Caring for self in order to love others.

These three virtues justice, fidelity and self-love are virtues of relationship and forms of love. At times they will conflict with each other. It is the fourth virtue of **Prudence** that makes it possible to discern which of the relational virtues should be of priority at a particular time.

The work of God renewing communities of faith through our hands, feet, hearts, minds and spirit is a work whose essence requires each one of us to recognize our finitude and dependence on God. This stands in complete contrast to a culture built on denial of the inevitability of death, human limitations, and the source of real power. To remain in such a counter cultural work requires that we allow God to feed and nourish us.

God fed us through the Spirit alive and active in Eileen Burke-Sullivan and in our colleagues on The Way. May God be praised and may you be blessed. Thank you Eileen. Amen.

Ellen Schippert