

## MATTHEW 6; 1-6 & 16-18

### SILENCE HOPE

In our gospel Matthew quotes Jesus first speaking about our need for humility, “Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them”. Jesus, as he does so many times, points out that our greatest obstacle to our peace, happiness, and a relationship with our Father, is our focus on ourselves. Then He offers a solution, He calls us to a relationship, with our Father in a very special and concrete way. He calls us to speak to His Father, our Father, He says “When you pray go into your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret”. Prayer is the language of our relationship with God, but this form of prayer, called contemplation or meditation, is the most intimate. We learn to listen and hear the voice of God. We learn what is important to

us and what is not. As we practice this form of silent prayer consistently we learn that we and God together are directing our lives. We get to know ourselves. Most of us shy away from this kind of intense, intimate experience. Truth telling to ourselves is not as easy as we might think. But telling ourselves the truth about why we do what we do is the first step in our own growth to becoming more like Jesus.

Our spiritual journey to God is inward, thus we must know ourselves. Jesus is telling us that it is in the silence of our own hearts that God will help us find our true selves.

Jesus is also encouraging us to hope. Because our Father cares enough about each one of us, to be with us as we listen to our own hearts. He will be there to guide us.

We hear from Thomas Merton in his book titled, "Contemplative Prayer", Underlying all life is the ground of

doubt and self-questioning which sooner or later must bring us face to face with the ultimate meaning of our life. This self-questioning can never be without a certain existential dread- a sense of insecurity, of lostness, of exile, of sin. A sense that one has been untrue not so much to moral or social norms but to one's own inmost truth". It is contemplative prayer in our inner room, our heart, that Jesus is talking about in our gospel, that will lead us to the awareness, of that inmost truth, that we are loved by God. In our inner room God leads us to an understanding of our true desires, what we hope for, to be loved by God for eternity.

I want to end by sharing with you Thomas Merton's prayer of Hope. I will have copies for you after mass.

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will

end, Nor do I really know myself and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please You does in fact please You. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know if I do this, You will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore, I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for You are ever with me, and will never leave me to face my perils alone.