

The Care and Nurturing of the Liturgical Minister

MINISTERIAL/LITURGICAL BURNOUT

"I woke up one day with the realization that I was living in a very dark place and that the term "burnout" was a convenient psychological translation for spiritual death. In the midst of this I kept praying, "Lord, show me where you want me to go and I will follow you, but please be clear and unambiguous about it!"

First Movement: FROM RELEVANCE TO PRAYER

The First Temptation: RELEVANCE

"...the Christian leader of the future is called to be completely irrelevant and to stand in this world with nothing to offer but his or her own vulnerable self. That is the way Jesus came to reveal God's love. The great message that we have to carry, as minister's of God's Word and followers of Jesus, is that God loves us not because of what we do or accomplish, but because God has created and redeemed us in love and has chosen us in love and has chosen us to proclaim that love as the true source of all human life."

"The question is not: How many people take you seriously? How much you are going to accomplish? Can you show some results? But: Are you in love with Jesus? Do you know the Incarnate God?

"The Christian leader of the future is the one who truly knows the heart of God as it has become flesh, "a heart of flesh," in Jesus."

The Discipline: CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

"To live a life that is not dominated by desire to be relevant but is instead safely anchored in the knowledge of God's first love, we have to be mystics. A mystic is a person whose identity is deeply rooted in God's first love." (The disciple whom Jesus loved)

"The encounter with Jesus Christ takes place in our daily lives, in the direct contact of prayer, in the wise discernment of the signs of the times, and in our brothers and sisters." (Pope Francis)

Second Movement: FROM POPULARITY TO MINISTRY

The Second Temptation: POPULARITY

"Jesus refused to be a stunt man. He did not come to walk on hot coals, swallow fire, or put his hand in lion's mouth to demonstrate that he had something worthwhile."

The Discipline: Confession and Forgiveness

"What discipline is required for the future leader to overcome the temptation of individual heroism? I would like to propose the discipline of confession and forgiveness. Just as the future leader must be mystic deeply steeped in contemplative prayer, so also must they be persons always willing to confess their own brokenness and ask for forgiveness from those to whom they minister."

"Christian leaders are called to live the Incarnation, that is, to live in the body, not only in their own bodies but also in the corporate body of the community, and to discover there the presence of the Holy Spirit."

Third Movement: FROM LEADING TO BEING LED

The Third Temptation: TO BE POWERFUL

"It seems easier to be God than to love God, easier to control people than to love people, easier to own life than to love life."

The Discipline: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

"The Christian leaders of the future have to be theologians, persons who know the heart of God and are trained~ through prayers, study, and careful analysis~ to manifest the divine event of God's saving work in the midst of he many seemingly random events of their time.

Theological reflection is reflecting in the painful and joyful realities of every day with the mind of Jesus and thereby of God's gentle guidance."

DEAR JESUS,

Help me to spread Your fragrance everywhere I go.

Flood my soul with Your spirit and life.

Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of Yours.

Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel Your presence in my soul.

Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus!

Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as You shine, so to shine as to be a light to others; the light, O JESUS, will be all from You; none of it will be mine: it will be You shining on others through me. Let me thus praise You in the way You love best: by shining on those around me.

Let me preach You without preaching, not by words, but by my example, by the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what I do, the evident fullness of the love my heart bears for You.

AMEN.