

Reflections

On

A Common Rule for Monastics



Service

(Chapter10)

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Another word for service is, in fact, "love."

Chapter 10, Paragraph 2, Line 6

What Does It Mean?

As Christians, we are driven to action as part of our response to the grace of God. If we find ourselves committed to activities out of obligation, guilt or coercion and not out of love, our actions are like that clanging cymbal Paul spoke about in First Corinthians 13. If love is used interchangeably with service, then as Christians, service must be like breathing – not second nature, but simply our nature.

So, how do we serve? The Cub Scouts got it right in the words of the Cub Scout Law: ***"..... thinks of others before him/herself; and does a good turn every day."*** While we may think of others before ourselves, we must be mindful of ourselves, and as paragraph 6 suggests, we must love/serve/give to ourselves.

We give out of a heart of love. I see service as God using me as a channel of His love. Very rarely would I regard the service I give as coming from me. Although I may enjoy the activity, I realize that I am only the instrument by which God does the serving. The service comes through me.

With regards to giving the best that I can give, am I there yet? Perhaps not. I need all that He has to offer on this journey of love. What I am focusing on are those practices that nurture my desire to do what pleases God.

Love gives. John 3:16 tell us, because of God's love, He gave (His Son). Therefore, service is giving. Loving is giving. If we serve only to receive, whether it be for recognition or material things, what we did was a job, not a service.

Several passages in Scriptures remind me of service driven by love. Other than the examples of Jesus, the one I like the most is the story of the sick man and his four "crazy" friends. So determined were they to see that their friend got the best that the Healer had to offer, they tore up a roof and lowered him into the house to accomplish their objective. (Luke 5:19).

Are There Struggles?

The struggles I foresee in giving service, may stem from it being overwhelming, because those being served are ungrateful or rude. To a lesser extent, there not being enough hours in a day.

On occasion, when I my serving was faced with the above struggles, I simply remind myself that I am their servant, I am His servant and I am doing His service. Also, short prayers are offered, like, "The joy of the Lord gives me strength."

Impact On Vocation

It may be a bit early to say that the concerns of providing genuine service may not have an impact on my vocation. I would say though, that any type of new endeavor would be prefaced by prayer. I hope to maintain the same level of service I currently provide. My problem is I feel I don't do enough, even though (I think) I am very engaged.

We must simply remember that the nature of love is service, and as children of God we are children of love and of service. Through our daily practices we must develop our intimacy with Christ and follow His guidance to love and to serve.