

Reflections

On

A Common Rule for Monastics



Being Human

(Chapter 5)

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A challenge suggests that, though there may be obstacles, the thing being pursued is an intentional pursuit, something desired, something that one has determined, is a pursuit of which obtaining success is possible.

In this pursuit, my thoughts are immediately drawn to the words/phrase "original", "identity" and "with Christ". While Paul says making a reconnection to our original self is a challenge, he never suggested that it was impossible.

While thinking of the word original, pristine comes to mind. Why pristine? Because our original self was unspoiled and untouched by sin and the things of the kingdoms of this world.

The full text of Colossians 3:3 reads, **"for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."** This suggests that it is imperative that we put to death our false self so that our true selves, that which is connected to Christ (paragraph 2 line 8) can live with Christ in God. The act of putting to death is the point of the reconnection. Even if there is doubt that we can fully make the reconnection, we ought to take the path which leads away from "disconnection" and to an ordered life in Christ.

I've read somewhere, the words: **"Before there was original sin, there was original goodness."** This may comfort us in our pursuit of reconnection, because we can relax in the knowledge that in God's eyes His creation is "very good", and as intentional, mature Christians, we are drawn to that original identity.

If our lives are hidden with Christ in God, what manner of men ought we be? First of all, why is it hidden? Was this word used because what we as saints have (grace and eternal life) is hidden from the world? As children of God whose lives are hidden with Christ, we do the things the Christ wills. Nothing cannot be in a thing and not live according to the essence and purpose of the thing. "With" also suggest a connection, communion, fellowship – with God in His Christ and Holy Spirit. We are one with Christ and therefore our major focus must be Christlikeness.

Micah 6:8 tells us what is required of us as mortals: **"... to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."** In other words, we must do what He does. He is just and He is kind. Humbly, suggests that it is not about us, but about the things of God. The more we are in Christ and the "deeper" we go, the more we become like Christ and the closer we get to a full reconnecting to our original identity, our True Self.

The chapter's focus is on the True Self and its connectedness to other true selves and Christ. This reflection also focused on the True Self, but more on how we reconnect with it. The challenge is to first accept that we need to reconnect, then do the things that make that reconnection possible.

If I were to sum up this reflection in a mantra, it would be **"For you have died"**. Galatians 12:20 reads, *"I have been **crucified** with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."* This gives me the impetus to take the road of connectivity, and in connecting with the Creator through His Christ, I would get to know the masterpiece (the true me) he created, and live a life worthy of His craftsmanship.

These reflections, other exercises, daily practices and additional inspiration and encouragement during this Postulancy, have been a source for greater determination. Yes, challenges remain. Yes, obstacles/distractions are there. My answer to whether or not reconnection with and emergence of my true self is possible, is the answer to many of the Officiant's questions at Recommitment Service and at Ordinations: **"The Lord being my Helper."**

I look forward, come what may, to going from strength to strength, both in my personal and communal endeavors towards reconnection.