

# Spiritual Readings for the month of October 2021

Please choose a reading and questions for reflection.

## **Reading # 1**

“John was in prison threats of violence were very much in the air kingdom was threatened by violence and force. In spite of his miracles, preaching, (home) visitation, long nights in prayer, many of the cities, Chorazin, Bethsaida, Tyre, Sidon, Capernaum, were unrepentant and unmoved. Jesus’ power seemed small, limited to those who were infants. Imagine the weariness of Jesus. In this context Jesus spoke these words:

‘Come to me all you who are weary and carry heavy burdens and I will give you rest. take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light’. Matthew 11: 28 to 30.

## **Reflection:**

It is clear that over the last 19 months we have been in a period of great stress. There is much weariness and stress in us. Lots of people are carrying heavy burdens. We need to return to Jesus and to our founders for help with these burdens

I plead that we recognize the spiritual challenges facing all of us and try hard and with patience to listen to Jesus and to follow the way of our leaders especially Frederic Ozanam. I speak for my self in my weariness and I see this stress in many of you my brothers and sisters.

I heartedly encourage you to draw on the biography, “Antoine Frederic Ozanam” by Raymond L. Sickinger. It remains a relevant and powerful source of inspiration.

The weariness and the burdens we are carrying are in part due to the fact that we all want to be accountable and transparent to one another and to those whom we serve. Transparency and accountability are more than one way streets. They move horizontally and vertically, in a circle, through all that we say and do. Every conference wants to be responsible for the neighbours in need, to the parishes from whom they draw their resources. We want accurately and straightforward to one another as well as to the broader community of neighbouring councils, conferences, and the Toronto Central Council. The same is true of all conferences and the Toronto Central Council; everyone must be able to ask and report to everyone else, as much as possible in a simple straight forward manner to ensure transparency and accountability. If a council is asked to be transparent and accountable, then the conferences and Central must also be transparent. This is hard work and time consuming. I am not calling for more bureaucracy... far from it...not reporting for the sake of more work but to communicate for effectiveness in our service. I think it is absolutely essential for our Society that we do not get locked into internecine and fruitless conflict. Disagreement and debate is healthy; meanness of spirit and overall distrust is a recipe for more weariness. Jesus was transparent with, and accountable, to His Father and with his disciples. We beg one another and our Society to be accountable and transparent to, and with, Jesus and our Father. We know over the past there have been some hard conflicts and tensions; let us look to Ozanam and to Jesus. We ask for the kind of rest and nourishment for our souls that we need to continue over the next year.

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**Reading # 2:** It is interesting and exciting to learn about such gifts as Wisdom!

According to Cynthia Bourgeault, "Wisdom is not knowing more, but knowing with more of you, knowing deeper."

Richard Rohr is a master at building on all meaningful quotes. He tells us, "The lens that we most associate with knowing is intellectual knowing. It's the result of formal education and it has to do with science, reason, logic, and what we call intelligence. Most of us are trained to think that is the only way of knowing or the superior way of knowing. Yet that isn't necessarily true. Seeing intellectual intelligence as the best or only way of knowing is actually a great limitation.

Emotion: Great emotions are especially powerful teachers. Love, ecstasy, hatred, jealousy, fear, despair, anguish; each have their lessons. Even anger and rage are great teachers, if we listen to them. They have so much power to reveal our deepest self to ourselves and to others, yet we tend to consider them negatively. I would guess that people die and live much more for emotional knowing than they ever will for intellectual, rational knowing. To taste these emotions is to live in a new reality afterward, with a new ability to connect.

Senses: Senses allow us to know reality more deeply, on our body's terms instead of our brain's terms. It is no surprise that Jesus touched most of the people He healed. Something very different is communicated and known through physical touch, in contrast with what is communicated through mere words."

**Reflection:**

Now, what do you think:

1) Is this not the stuff to which we give very little thought, but live out every single day? "To taste these emotions is to live in a new reality afterward, with a new ability to connect."

2) It is perfectly acceptable to look upon love and ecstasy as desired emotions but, who among us would have considered referring to hatred and jealousy as 'great emotions' and 'powerful teachers'?

**Prayer:**

O Lord, it is through your touch that we receive healing for ourselves. In turn, empower us with courage and wisdom to stretch out our hands of healing towards our Neighbors in Need and to one another. Jesus, you have spoken plainly in John's Gospel, "Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I am doing. He will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father." Show us, O God, that these words are not half baked or under cooked; they are real! powerful! and true! Amen.