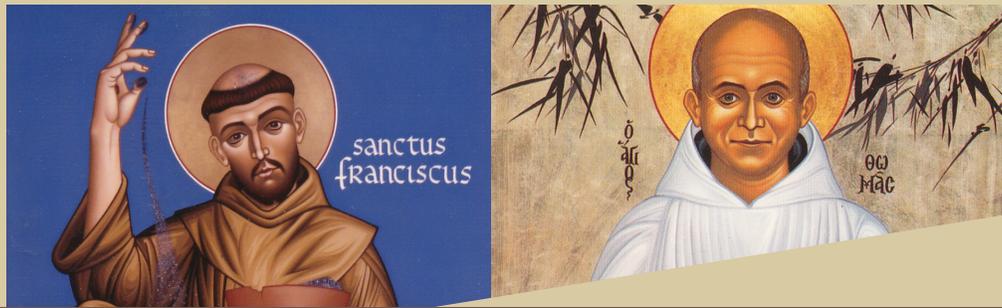


# CAC Foundation Set



## Notes for: Contemplative Prayer

“Whoever remains in me,  
as I in them,  
will bear much fruit.”  
(John 15:5)

It is all about getting the WHO right! Religion and, finally, justice work, are about transformation of the Self, not membership in any group, moral behavior, or doctrinal beliefs.

Not so much WHAT we do, but the WHO that is acting is what liberates and brings life to the world. The autonomous, false self can do objectively good things, and God will use them, but they will not bear nearly as much fruit as even simple things done in union with God, out of the True Self. This is very “old fashioned” teaching, and yet utterly radical, even today.

### The False self/small self (“the flesh,” the sensual self)

The great illusion.

- Autonomous/always unsure of love.
- Self sufficiency/a monologue with the self.
- I create all the patterns by doing it right or doing it wrong.
- Who all of us think we are after leaving the garden of primal union.
- Anxiously looks for “answers”:
  - How can I do it right?
  - How can I be good?
  - How can I be significant?
  - How can I be worthy?
- Far too much “I”
- Because it is so fragile and
  - must overcompensate and
  - try hard.
- Fear-based, scarcity of self
- Knows it needs to “sacrifice” something (human, animal, projected, heroic, and disguised in all of religious history.)
- Never sees that it is precisely itself as separate that needs to be sacrificed!
- Which today we call ego,
  - religion calls pride,

### The True self in God (The Soul or Spirit, in some languages)

The great truth.

- Inherently connected/God **cannot not** love.
- A dialogical life with the Other.
- I am merely a part of a Bigger Pattern and can only trust, surrender, rest there.
- Cannot be thought but only experienced—but first as LOSS.
- Feels like leaving the only garden we know.
- Somehow IS an answer, and so does not need answers or perfection out there.
- Lives in confidence and gratitude without answers.
- Ironically, can now
  - Be Peace,
  - Do Justice,
  - Act with Freedom—no need to win, prove the self, or succeed.
- True non-violence is now possible.
- Love- and joy-based, True Self is characterized by **abundance**. Ironically, now able to sacrifice for others freely because there is nothing to protect and nothing to prove.
- The great sacrifice has already taken place
- “Unless the grain of wheat dies, it remains just a grain of wheat.”

## The False self/small self

("the flesh," the sensual self)

- Buddhism calls illusion,
- Jesus calls "the branch cut off from the vine."
- This self maintains itself by performance/requirements/law/control/hierarchical assurance.
- Becomes ever more frantic when it does not create a substantial self.
- 'Scribes and Pharisees', all institutional religion when it does not lead to transformation.
- The **Relative Identity** that all religion is trying to liberate you from.
- Not the bad self, just the false self,
- Not bad at all unless you think
  - it is all you have.
  - you take it too seriously, either in its successes or in its failures.
  - you put all your eggs in this basket!
  - This is what "dies" and thus need not be protected.
  - NOT the soul.
- Yet is very hurttable, and insecure,
  - very needy,
  - very small and petty unless in touch with the Absolute Identity.
- Does not know how to pray,
  - "says" prayers from its isolated space.
  - Prays "to" Jesus.
- The calculative mind, but now includes God in the calculation. Well-disguised egocentricity.
- All has to be expelled, exposed, made right by **my** effort.
- Makes one righteous.
- Still into technique, method, "me getting it right."
- **Bad News**, the same old story line of all of history.
- Good people get trapped here. Gives the ego something to succeed at.

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## The True self in God

(The Soul or Spirit, in some languages)

- Not performance but surrender,
- Not requirements but relationship,
- Not correctness but connection,
- Not effort but gratitude.
- Not much middle management needed, a combination of the:
  - **Way of the monkey** (hold on with all your might—effort/discipline/practice)
  - **Way of the kitten** (go limp and trusting so Mom can pick you up and carry you where you need to go.)
- The **Absolute Identity** that all religion is pointing towards.
- God, "my rock, my fortress, my deliverer."
- Makes you fall in love with God, who is both your deepest, truest self, and yet totally beyond you—at the same time—and always choosing you in your you-ness.
- Feels like you are home free! The "soul" in most religious language.
- Cannot be hurt.
- Only desires deeper union.
- Very compassionate with the Relative Identity—understands its need to use roles, functions, and status symbols. But it knows HOME BASE.
- Is a prayer/"Prays always."
- Life has moved from a self-centered monologue to a God-centered dialogue that is somehow constant. Don't fit it in anymore.
- Prays "through" Jesus.
- Nothing to be excluded, attacked, coerced.
- Only held, forgiven, loved, and worked with.
- Everything Belongs. **Good News**, a genuinely new story line. All is gift and mercy and compassion here. Only mystics and sinners know this place, one consciously, the other in spite of themselves.

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## Notes for: Gospel Call for Compassionate Action

"Listen my dear brothers and sisters; it was those who are poor according to the world that God chose, to be rich in faith and to be the heirs to the kingdom which he promised to those who love him. In spite of this, you have no respect for anybody who is poor." -James 2: 5-6.

1. Church of the Poor – From the prophets to Jesus to Constantine (313 AD)
2. Church for the Poor – From Constantine till Vatican II ("Christendom")
3. Church with the Poor – Our new conversion: "preferential option for the poor."

The poor person is one who temporarily or permanently finds himself in a situation of weakness, dependence or humiliation. It is a state characterized by a lack of means: which can be in the form of money, relationships, influence, power, science, technology, honorable birth, physical strength, intellectual ability, personal freedom, or human dignity.

The poor person might well be at fault to some degree, but poverty is primarily a psychological state which one surrenders to after repeatedly being assaulted by negative voices from within or from without. Soon they are "oppressed" and cannot even recognize, much less take advantage of the opportunities that might present themselves. The poor person has no possibility of changing his state without at least some help (good news) from another.

VICTIM BEHAVIOR is that self-destructive and other-destructive life style which characterizes oppressed peoples. It is predictable and deadly and characterizes much of the human race. In fact, we are all "victims" of it somehow. Biblically and morally, we referred to this state as the state of sin.

Eventually, oppressed peoples form a whole subculture, which takes differing forms in differing ages and cultures. These subcultures are controlled by fear, anger, guilt, prejudice, superstition, compulsive behavior, inhibitions, fantasies, fatalism, conformity, hopelessness, sexual "acting-out" and passivity.

The outsider usually cannot understand. They misinterpret almost everything from their position of presumed superiority. The oppressed become the screen for their own shadow projections. The poor therefore becomes despised and separated (alienated, marginalized, pushed to the periphery). The poor, therefore, (mentally and physically handicapped, minority groups, refugees, the addicted, homosexuals, prisoners, and any who have failed in our social or economic success system) *represent what we are*

*most afraid of within ourselves and what we most deny within ourselves.*

### JESUS IS PRIMARILY ADDRESSING THE GOOD NEWS TO THIS GROUP!!!!

"I have come to preach the Gospel to the poor."  
Luke 4:18

"Happy are you poor—the kingdom of God is yours."  
Luke 6:20

To be the Church, we need to be in immediate contact with the poor, we must preach the Gospel first of all to the poor:

1. Not to save them for the Church,
2. Not to save them from their poverty,
3. Not to make reparation, out of guilt, or even sympathy for their plight,
4. Not even to be witnesses to generosity, nobility, or Christianity,
5. but TO BE CONVERTED TO COMPASSION
  - TO KNOW WHAT GOD IS REALLY LIKE,
  - TO DISCOVER OUR OWN SOULS
  - TO SAVE THE CHURCH AND THE GOSPEL FROM DISTORTION
  - TO BE IN FULL SOLIDARITY WITH WEAKNESS AND TRUTH,
  - TO MOST SIMPLY, "DO WHAT JESUS DID."

"It is important that we reevaluate, in community, our communion and participation with the poor, the humble, the lowly. It will be, at the same time, necessary to listen to them, to accept their deepest aspirations, to value, discern, encourage, correct, with the desire that the Lord guide us to make real our unity with them in one body and spirit. This demands of us the personal and emotional renunciation, according to the Gospel, of our privileges, way of thinking, ideologies, preferential relationships, and material goods." (Latin American Bishops at Puebla, #974)

"The Church is firmly committed to the cause of the poor, for she considers it to be her mission, her service, a proof of her fidelity to Christ, so that she can truly be the 'church of the poor.' " *Laborem exercens* #8 John Paul II's encyclical letter on labor and capital

The Lord has so designed his Church that each group needs and liberates the other: we must liberate the poor from their oppression and they must liberate us from our illusions.