

Contemplative Outreach of Central Florida
Night of Sense, Night of Spirit Workshop with Susan Komis
Church of Our Saviour, Cocoa Beach
April 22 and 23, 2016

Friday, April 22, 2016:

- 6:00 PM** Registration and Gathering
- 6:30 PM** Centering Prayer (*20 min. period - in Chapel*) – Dorene Gill
- 7:00 PM** Welcome and introductions - Father Fred Ruse and Nestor de Armas
- 7:45 PM** St. John of the Cross, Susan Komis
- 8:30 PM** Adjourn

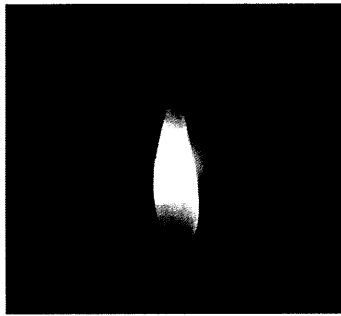
Saturday, April 23, 2016:

- 8:00 AM** Registration and Gathering
- 8:30 AM** Centering Prayer (*20 min. period - in conference room*) - Rosemary Van Pelt
- 8:50 AM** Break
- 9:00 AM** Welcome, Introductions, Brief Review from Friday Evening
- 9:30 AM** Presentation: *The Night of Sense*
- 10:40 AM** Break
- 10:55 AM** *Night of Sense (cont'd.)*
- 12:00 PM** Small Group Process
- 12:30 PM** Lunch
- 12:45 PM** Centering Prayer (*20 min. period - in Chapel*) - Tony Ippolito
- 1:15 PM** Presentation: *The Night of Spirit*
- 2:30 PM** Break
- 2:45 PM** *Night of Spirit (cont'd.)*
- 4:00 PM** Open Forum/ Large Group Closure
- 4:30 PM** Go In Peace

Principle Events in the Life of St. John of the Cross

- 1542 Birth of Juan de Yepes at Fontiveros, Spain, near Avila
- 1545 Death of John's father; Death of middle brother 2 years later
- 1551 Mother, John and brother move to Medina del Campo, Spain
- 1563 John at age 21 joins Carmelite Order – takes name of John of St. Matthias
- 1564 Finishes novitiate – attends University of Salamanca to study Theology
- 1567 Ordination of John as Priest. Meets Teresa of Avila and agrees to work with her in the reformation of the Carmelite Order
- 1571 Appointed rector of new Discalced College at Alcala de Henares
- 1572 Appointed as confessor at the convent of the Incarnation, Avila until 1576
- 1577 Kidnapped and imprisoned in friary at Toledo. He composes his poem The Spiritual Canticle
- 1578 Escapes from prison. John goes to El Calvario as Prior.
- 1582 Death of St. Teresa of Avila
- 1582-88 Ministry in Granada – years of writing, administration, travel
- 1588 Returns to Castile to Segovia for quieter years of ministry
- 1590 Disagreements within Carmelite Order affect John's position
- 1591 John is stripped of offices. Prepares to embark for Mexico under a cloud of slander; travels to Ubeda where he dies on December 14th as a result of primitive form of surgery

*The Dark Nights of the Soul :
The Night of Sense; The
Night of Spirit*



"There is an unknowing that is higher than all knowledge; a darkness that is supremely bright; and in this dazzling darkness, divine things are given to the saints"

PART I : The Night of Sense

If we desire a literal approach to the contemplative journey that reduces spiritual truth to a simple, external bottom-line path, then the contemplative journey is not for us.

- Who is John of the Cross? Priest, monk, Carmelite, reformer, author, teacher

Four major literary works of St. John of the Cross:

- Ascent of Mt. Carmel, Dark Night of Soul, The Spiritual Canticle, Living Flame of Love

1. The Night of Sense

Three Classical Signs:

- Pervasive aridity, general absence of God
- Comprehensive sense that something is wrong
- Former spiritual practices no longer console

Three Classical Trials:

- Spirit of Dizziness (Security/Survival Center)
- Spirit of Blasphemy (Power/Control Center)

- Spirit of Fornication (Sensation Center)

-2-

Fruit of Night of Sense:

Night of Sense – first biblical “desert” experience

Two “banks” of the Night of Sense - Devotion, Service

Weans us from experiencing God through human sensory perception

Development of intuitive faculties (*spiritual senses*)

PART II: The Night of Spirit

The Purpose of Night of Spirit is Three-fold:

Personal: Releases one from thinking the spiritual journey is primarily for self

- Transpersonal: One begins search for God in relationship; expands to God’s greater purpose
- Making God the Center: detachment of anything in us that is not of God in terms of dark nights
- The purpose of the Night of Sense/Night of Spirit is to prepare one for Transforming Union with God.

John moves us to critical thresholds of Faith:

- A threshold marks the emergence of a new mode of being (*be-coming*)
- A threshold is distinguishable from the stage which preceded it
- Stage that follows is like a doorway
- Denotes a turning point launching one into deeper stage of faith, hope, love
- A given stage may comprise several phases, e.g. “settling” in phase, advanced phase
- Qualities of critical thresholds: 1) radical 2) irreversible 3) successive

John of the Cross leads us through three major initiations of the spiritual journey of mystery, faith, and the interior life:

- First Stage: Wound of Love
- Second Stage: Wound of Interpersonal Love
- Third Stage: Wound of Consuming Love

Each stage is involves a personal conversion, known or unknown

The Dark Nights are a movement beyond self to the Other

The level of Faith to which the disciple travels from this point (*which is God*), is a dark night to the soul in this life.

Four “Nights” that the soul passes through:

- Night of Sense Active and Passive Night
- Active Nights: What we can do regarding our spiritual journey
- Passive Nights: What only God can do regarding our spiritual journey

Faults of Beginners on the spiritual journey (*according to St. John of the Cross*)

- Motivation is not union with God, but spiritual highs/gratification
- Vanity – desiring spiritual attainment
- Critical of other aspirants
- Sad when others progress ahead of them or assume roles they desire
- False piety – act most holy and want to be recognized as such
- Greed for books, maxims, pictures, holy objects
- Over-attachment to spiritual persons
- Frustrated when not receiving spiritual consolations
- Angry over others’ sins
- Want to be saints in a day
- Overdo spiritual practices and neglect duties of ordinary life
- Believe they know the best way to God
- Caught in the trap of “my will be done” vs. Will of God be done through them

(small group reflection on these points)

Differentiation Between Dark Nights & Depression:

Depression: Preoccupied with self – all is for naught – may not be able to function;
going nowhere – may require clinical help/therapy to recover

Dark Night: Trials going somewhere – meaning slowly emerges – continue to function –
Less judgmental – growth in humility – trust in God – change in perspectives

Doubt, despair and self isolation can be transformed to faith, hope, love – to resurrected life!

Hidden Ladder of Perfection:

Ladder of Contemplation: Process of descending and ascending, being humbled and being exalted in God - the journey from believing to knowingfrom ordinary Faith to Pure Faith

Perfection comes with knowledge of self and knowledge of God – soul alternates between the two (*Jacob’s Vision*)

St. John presents his ten steps of the “Ladder of Love” (*refer to handout on the Hidden Ladder*)

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Principle Fruits of the Night of Spirit:

- Freedom from over-identification of roles due to spiritual gifts, charisms;
- Purifies all secret satisfactions
- Purification of the unconscious
- Freedom from last traces of domination of emotional programs
- Purification of our concepts of God (*childhood ideas of God*)
- Purification of theological virtues of faith, hope, love
- Purification of deep rooted selfishness

Maturing concepts of God:

- What image did we have as an expression of “God” as children?
- What image do we now have as an expression of our “God?”

The “I” of self centeredness diminishes as the great “I AM” looms in its place

(dismantling of false self; emergence of True Self dominates human personality and activity)

Traditional Christian Contemplative Spiritual Journey:

- **Purgative:** Purification from the grossest forms of egotism and selfishness
- **Illuminative:** Breaking in upon the person of greater spiritual insights/understanding
- **Unitive:** Essential Union – intellectually know that God is present in all creatures
(this state is not habitual)
- **Supernatural:** Through experience and understanding of its impression upon the soul
(this state is habitual)
- **Union of Likeness:** Soul resembles Christ in all activity

“From Beginning to End, the interior life is an ongoing illumination of

I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE.” ...John 10:30

Revised April, 2016

Ten Steps of the Hidden Ladder of Love

"Night of the Spirit" ... John of the Cross

1st Step

Makes the soul "sick in order to heal. The soul begins to lose its appetite for past things.

2nd Step

Inspires the soul to search for God. It centers its attention on the Beloved.

3rd Step

Encourages the soul to be fervent in acting and thinking that all it does is little.

4th Step

Causes the soul to serve God alone and not seek consolation elsewhere.

5th Step

Love produces impatient longing and desire for God. Waiting seems long and tiresome.

6th Step

Results in a purified love and may experience many "touches in him."

7th Step

Makes the soul bold and daring as in the story of Moses.

8th Step

Brings a possession of the Beloved, but is not yet a continual state.

9th Step

It is the highest union of love possible in this life. After this step, the soul leaves the body. It is the highest union of love possible in this life.

10th Step

The last rung of the ladder unites the soul completely to God. All that the soul is becomes like God.

Because contemplation is infused passively and secretly, the soul's journey is hidden from the devil/evil ... John of the Cross



A meditative attitude is eternally prepared to wait. Freed from any pretensions of knowing, nothing in particular is expected to happen. Such waiting is content to let things be while at the same time acknowledging that, concealed within the mystery, there is an unknown and unknowing.

That which lies hidden cannot be coaxed forth. It has its own time beyond the time of what can be recollected and anticipated. Waiting waits; it is alert to every moment but has no expectations.

...Stephen Batchelor

Characteristics of the Emerging True Self

False Self Definition: That part of oneself that is not created in the Image of God

True Self Definition: That part of oneself that is created in the Image of God

1. One becomes acutely aware of the human condition and one's own false self in action; aware of one's need for divine therapy.
2. One becomes aware of one's powerlessness to change their false self value system by and through their own effort.
3. One becomes aware that one is always capable of the most primitive behavior; develops ability to return quickly to "centered" place.
4. Increasing desire to commune deeply with God – growing sense of intimacy with God in prayer - deeper consent to activity of God within us and in daily life.
5. Deep appreciation for the gift of life and world we inhabit; God becomes apparent to our ordinary awareness in daily life.
6. Gradual purification of hidden motives/agendas – one desires what is good for all concerned; the negative energy of dominant centers dissipates.
7. Gradual awareness of the power and impact of our thought processes, both positive/negative influences. One learns to redirect negative influences.
8. The Beatitudes begin to manifest within/without in one's life – new attitudes of Be-ing; a greater disposition to freedom.
9. Fosters a radical movement from "believing" to "knowing" (*sacred gnosis*) beyond intellectual knowledge; interior prayer facilitates a gradual development of the intuitive faculties.
10. Movement to humility - less judgmental of self and others; aware of one's limited human capacity for authentic love. One opens to the love of God to receive capacity to genuinely love others.
11. Spirit leads one back through all the stages of one's life to reveal the value of life experience hidden in each stage; Spirit extends invitation to forgive self and others.
12. Contemplative gifts of the Spirit begin to manifest in one's life:
 - Gift of Knowledge (*knowledge of God within us and Creation*)
 - Gift of Wisdom (*knowledge of God through life experience*)
 - Gift of Understanding (*penetration of the truth of faith*)

13. Absolute trust/faith in God - no doubt remains as to one's eternal relationship with God.
14. The transformation process may infuse a state of Christ-Consciousness; the "mind of Christ" present in one's activity and relationships.
15. One begins to live ordinary life with extraordinary Love.
16. The love of God manifests the desire to share God with others through loving service.

And, as I become free of my fears, and learn to live in harmony, Love will shine through and people will know that you live in my heart Psalm 59

Revised August, 2013