



THE AKEANON BUKIDNON WOMEN FARMERS THE KAINGEROS STATE OF BEING “INTO THE WOODS” AND ITS POSTMODERN NOTION OF VISUALIZATION

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ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS:

Spirituality, God, disorientation, Families, Darkness

In his book “Spirituality for Mission,” Michael Collins Reilly enunciates: “Christian spirituality can be described as the daily lifestyle of the believing Christian. It is the way a person lives in a definite historical situation according to his vision of faith, that is, according to his personal assimilation of the mystery of Christ under the direction of the Holy Spirit.”⁴ Thus, the very core of what we call Christian spirituality is a lifestyle in faith. It is a complete surrender in Jesus Christ. Thus, no one is a tabula rasa. Everybody consciously strives for self-transcendence. Here God challenges persons to live and to love in the Christian dimension because it is love that breaks us out of our silence, self-absorption and isolation.

Illness (A.I.D.S., Cancer, S.A.R.S. stroke etc.) is a complex phenomenon. It produces despair and chaos. Persons with A.I.D.S., etc. suffer not only the collapse of body and mind caused by the opportunistic infections and tumors but also the psychological and moral anguish resulting from rejection, social stigma, and discrimination.

THE IMPASSE OF MID-LIFE JOURNEY: THE SPIRITUALITY OF IMPASSE

In his book “Spirituality for Mission,” Michael Collins Reilly enunciates: “Christian spirituality can be described as the daily lifestyle of the believing Christian. It is the way a person lives in a definite historical situation according to his vision of faith, that is, according to his personal assimilation of the mystery of Christ under the direction of the Holy Spirit.”⁴ Thus, the very core of what we call Christian spirituality is a lifestyle in faith. It is a complete surrender in Jesus Christ. Thus, no one is a tabula rasa. Everybody consciously strives for self-transcendence. Here God challenges persons to live and to love in the Christian dimension because it is love that breaks us out of our silence, self-absorption and isolation.

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The “Why me?” questions express bewilderment and disorientation. Families and friends of loved ones with debilitating illness also share deeply in the psychological, moral and spiritual suffering and pain. As an epidemic, A.I.D.S., etc. shows the fragile nature of the security provided by social institutions, while at the same time underscoring the interdependence and relatedness of all human beings.

Although people are surviving longer today, the spectre of death, darkness, and meaninglessness connotes the experience of chaos and powerlessness. The realization that there is no cure adds an oppressive feeling of claustrophobia to the bewilderment and malaise surrounding A.I.D.S. Circumstances like this, the person cannot readily call upon God.

This is the experience of “impasse” which Constance Fitzgerald conveys: By impasse, I mean there is no way out, no way around, no rational escape from, what imprisons one, no possibilities in the situation. In a true impasse every normal manner of acting is brought to a standstill, and ironically, impasse is experienced not only in the problem itself but also in any solution rationally attempted. Any movement out, any next step, is cancelled, and the most dangerous temptation is to give up, to quit, to surrender to cynicism and despair, in the face of the disappointment, disenchantment, hopelessness, and loss of meaning that encompass one.⁵

Impasse is where a person is when he cannot change things. Any solution he attempts leads to further impasse. Every solution he envisages simply creates the narrowing of possibilities. There is no way out. The experience of a possibility is a dead end. It is the negative image. The experience of impasse is experience of abandonment. The God of love that Jesus proclaimed is now on the cross seems terribly absent. What is left? Horrible darkness, fear, isolation.

Fitzgerald borrowed her remarks on impasse from St. John of the Cross and his idea of the dark night of the spirit. John of the Cross sees life's journey to full humanity as a **movement from sunset through midnight to dawn**. Full humanity is achieved in a total union with God, the transcendent yet immanent other who remains with the human person in all that happens. The journey begins when we take God seriously. Here, we begin to engage in religious practices such as praying/meditating more. We begin to really love God. We love helping maybe a great period of time. This sunset is a delightful, beautiful time. As time goes on, we don't anymore feel the presence of God. As night deepens little by little, the person is called upon to let go of all that is not God – the delight, the feeling of wonder in prayer, and God's apparent closeness. Then the individual arrives at the darkest part of a night - midnight. We have lost sight of everything, which used to furnish us with meaning and joy. Darkness surrounds us and fills us with anxiety. Fear of the unknown forms part of the risk-taking our quest for authenticity demands of us. Here even God disappears. Light is fading where God is totally non-existent. It is very frightening. We sense we are dreadfully alone in a hostile surroundings. All is dark and apparently hopeless.

In this obscurity hope seems heedless. This journey becomes insignificant; we question the existence of God. Here, pain, loss or suffering is God's punishment. What we thought was God seems but the figment of our imagination. Death is simply a big dark void. John of the Cross poignantly described this part of journey as the **Dark Night of the spirit**: At this stage a person suffers from sharp trials in his intellect, severe dryness and distress in his will, and from the burdensome knowledge of his own miseries in his memory, for his spiritual eye gives a very clear picture of himself. In the substance of his soul he suffers abandonment, supreme poverty, dryness cold and sometimes heat. He finds relief in nothing, nor is this a thought that consoles him, nor can he even raise his heart to God, so oppressed is he by this flame. This purgation resembles what Job said God did to him: You are changed to be cruel toward me (Jb 30:21). For when the soul suffers all these things jointly, it truly seems that God has become displeased with it and cruel. A person's suffering at this time cannot be exaggerated.⁶

This is an incredibly accurate representation of what people living with A.I.D.S. go through during and even after diagnosis. The fears, the confusion, the anxiety, the anger, the absence of God, the physical and psychological suffering – all are part of the "dark night." The dark night can also be a growth-producing experience, a possibility for an integration and transcending transformation into full human life. There is no other way a person can unlock the potential of impasse, the potential for authentic spirituality and transcendence.

This surrender is not fatalistic. It is a passive surrender allowing the impasse to control and direct us. An impasse transforms us only when our yielding is an active surrender with all the risk, which that entails. This surrender is a "Fiat" to God. It is a decisive moment to live out whatever it will hold in the future. It is a yes to God who loves and who desires wholeness and authenticity for the person. It is a resolution to live, not just to subsist, with A.I.D.S. In the brokenness, powerlessness, and poverty of the experience, the person can penetrate and be permeated by the loving God in this dark mystery. How is this possible? How can someone discover a God of love in this ugly situation? According to

Fitzgerald, the scriptures are filled with references to a God of unconditional and unmitigated love. With the people living with A.I.D.S., etc. God lives with them and suffers the rejection of family and friends, the ostracizing by society, the physical deterioration and pain.

John of the Cross delineates the movement from a desire, or love, that is possessive, entangled, complex, selfish, and unfree to a desire that is fulfilled with union with Jesus Christ and others. There is a dark side to human desire, and the experience of dark night is the way that desire is purified and freed. In the very experience of darkness and joylessness, in the suffering and withdrawal of accustomed pleasure, that this process engenders transformation. We are not educated for darkness. We see this experience, because of the shape it takes as a sign of death. Dark night is instead a sign of life, the very core of growth, of development in our relationship with God, in our best human relationship, in a societal life. This pathetic sign in hope arouses a new vision, a new experience of the incarnation of potentiality.

The movement from *twilight to midnight to dawn* is the progressive purification and transformation of the human person through what we cherish or desire darkness because we are deeply involved and committed in what we love and care for most. Love makes us vulnerable, and it is love itself and its development that precipitate darkness in oneself and in the other.

This experience of rage, anger, depression, abandonment and rejection is a constitutive part of the purification of the dark night. This is a progression, a redemption, an actualizing and affirmation of the human person in love that is not understood at the time. Its symbolic expression is dispossession and death. For John, one leaves the world of rejection and worthlessness by giving away one's powerlessness and poverty to the inspiration of the Spirit and one moves into a world of self esteem, affirmative compassion and solidarity. This affirmation and reception of the loving God is the first element of spirituality of people living with aids. Only this kind of soul's experience of night can engender the kind of solidarity and compassion that transforms the "I" into a "we," empowering one to say, "we poor," "we oppressed," "we exploited," This kind of identification with God's people, with the "other," is the fruit of the dark night.

EASTERN TRADITION

The observance of *brahmacharya*, the period of discipline in education, the first stage. The goal of *brahmacharya* is not merely learning from books or even through experience. The lesson focuses on a disciplined training of the will.

Garhasthya (the second stage) – is the period of development known as the life of the householder or the world's work. The Indian culture maintains that once a person loses touch with life he can no longer discipline himself effectively. Tagore says: "Wisdom does not attain completeness except through the living of life."⁷ Discipline that is divorced from wisdom is stupidity and possibly meaningless adherence to custom.

Vanaprasthya – in this third stage, man is aloof from the world though not out of touch with it. This ascribes to an interchange between himself and the world, but the intimate exchange that is characteristic of the householder is lacking. An intensified degree of distance and detachment is effected.

Pravrajya (the last stage) – the soul is freed. These four stages of life point to the twofold perfection of man: "the

perfection in being and perfection in doing. Thus freed, man can live fruitfully and intensely without fearing the conquering enemy – death. For Tagore, as long as a person is biologically healthy he remains unmindful of death. The quest for life necessitates facing the inevitability of death. Authentic facing of death discloses the mark of man’s finitude. It points to a kind of eschatological existence, which is oriented toward the ultimate end, while acknowledging a sort of urgency and responsibility in living.

True to his overall vision in life and of the world Tagore’s philosophy of education is *fulfillment through harmony with nature. A student/man will have an integrated life if he learns and assimilate the great lesson that nature imparts: the unity of all life.*

LIFE TESTIMONY: MID-LIFE JOURNEY

The movement defined in the life of man within the Indian culture context described above could be mirrored also to the lives of thousands of people participating on the recollection focusing on the Divine Mercy. Right now, they are in more or less 230 batches with participants ranging from more than a thousand to 5,000 people per batch depending on the weather. I actually went there many times bringing with me a number of people for them to experience diverging manifestations of the mercy of God.

In this place, they got already a record of more or less 10 people who were healed of their illness on A.I.D.S., almost all of them are seafarers. A lot of people left their wheelchairs for they can now walk. Cancers and other dreadful disease were also healed. The life testimony I will be presenting here is the life of one of the recipients for healing, a farmer, a kaingero, Tessie Sagada. This woman today keeps on coming back to Divine Mercy in Roxas city as part of her promise to the Lord during visualization. Who is this woman? Why is she doing that? To understand her, we need to know her past.

The span of human life configures 3 stages. The first one is the journey from childhood to maturity. The last one is the retirement journey or movement through old age into death. But there is also a middle course or midlife journey that many people pass through at some point between the late twenties and late fifties. Some people accepted each phase of life and build on it without much fuss.

The first journey passed through the challenges and crises of adolescence to define some meaningful existence and commit themselves to it. They took their place in the world as teachers, parents, businessman or whatever. But now things turn uncertain. They suffer a loss of orientation. They feel compelled to try themselves out again and enter on a voyage of self-exploration which can bring them to a profound self-discovery in the middle years of their lives.

Midlife journey includes an outer component, a physical movement through space that expresses and creates the context in which the real interior journey begins. Some shift in space is a feature of midlife journey.

Tessie Sagada grow up in Ortega, Libacao, Aklan. The intense life of the spirit in personal growth and unfolding was inculcated already to her as a girl. She learned through books and experiences. Innate in her heart was the desire for the Supreme Good – the Holy. The blind stirrings toward peaceful, silent unity of spirit are discernible. Seemingly, these yearnings are more difficult to extract because of personal and cultural sediments and pursuits.

She became a farmer, working in the fields (lowland and upland) and in the forest. In short, a kaingero.. She grow

up with subsistent economy. Affluence, however, and other economic preoccupations, are great distractions to some people but not to Tessie. On the other hand, the vast reaches of poverty, hunger and disease vitiate against the longed-for inwardness of millions in the Third World. Ego emphasis in both eastern and western countries wars against the emergence of the spirit which nestles so deeply within man.

The unreasonable pursuit of power, possession and pleasure, for Tessie, which runs counter to the whispering of the spirit is not pertinent for Tessie. Alcohol, men, casino and other vices could not penetrate in the life of Tessie. Usually, to a number of people such swift moving, weltering environment often succeeds in lethargizing the current of spirituality which meanders in them deep below the surface. Though their careless indifference may stifle the spirit, it will not efface it. Unless the spirit is allowed to emerge, however, he was caught in a polarized, schizophrenic existence.

Tagore accentuated the indispensability for discipline in man’s quest for self. Discipline could be epitomized in the Chinese proverb, “Find your roots and take wings.” That’s what Tessie did but to some people, they got no discipline. So, their quest of selfhood is rootless, dissipated, shiftless, onesided. Discipline provides the rootedness indispensable for integrating body and spirit, the interior and exterior dimensions of man, of liberating them both and offering them with wings enable them to soar beyond the bondedness of daily events and mundane ties. True discipline thrusts one into the role of discipleship. There is now an eclipse of man being motivated by a set of rigid rules and regulations imposed from the outside but rather by an inner force of willingness. But Tessie grow up a disciplinarian person who always obeys her parents lovingly.

Vanaprasthya and concentration both usher man into a distancing and detachment. If man is to concentrate, he is forced to empty himself of the fidgety, restless and anxious feelings that often bind him in its wise-like grip. Concentration means to live in the present. A number of people could lost this balance between being aloof from the world and being absolutely out of touch with it. In concentration we are drawn to a center, the focus, to intensify one’s life around a meaningful core. Centering pivots around the NOW. In Tessie’s testimony her life must be rooted in what she was doing in that moment of her life. Living in the past or yearning for the future impaired a number of people’s practice of concentration and fragmented their existence.

Concentration also engenders facilitating sensitivity to one’s self and others. Self-oriented sensitivity does not mean thinking primarily and exclusively of self. Rather, it means living in a state of relaxed alertness. Sensitivity toward oneself is a composite of awareness of the bodily dimension of the self. A person becomes attentive to bodily discomfort as well as pleasant and invigorating experiences. Sensitivity also configures an awareness of one’s emotional state. Am I depressed, irritated, anxious, joyful, quietly alert? Am I aware of the situations which thrust me into various moods as the interchange between me and my world occurs? It is praiseworthy to note that Tessie really grow up a very good young lady. Meanwhile, all of the above described evidently are eclipsed in the lives of so many people.

Garhasthya admonishes people to be in touch with life but in a disciplined way – the way of patience. Silence, reflection and relaxed presence are contingent upon a patient existence .but the world pole of our existence is never without

import. The attitude of patience is the sustaining substratum of the ongoing Quest for selfhood. Lacking patience, a person may be prone to give up long before the end of his journey.

The lives of so many people are filled with human projects, ambitions, and desires to be in control of themselves. This enchanted them, dissuading them from being committed and be attentive to the emerging spirit. The same spirit that tugs and pulls them. Much that once seemed significant earlier in their lives begins to fade away: restlessness, emptiness, and confusion replace their preoccupying thoughts of money, success, status and ambition. They tend also to never give up wrestling with God. So, they pursued his vices. It seems uncontrollable. They committed many crimes to sustain their vices and many people hated them so much for their evil deeds.

Loneliness marks their mid-life journey. This loneliness should eventually turn into the aloneness of peaceful and integrated self-possession. This is the threshold of their dissatisfaction with the community ideals. As a young Lady, Tessie's parents decided to give Tessie to a man for marriage. Deep inside, she hated such decision of her parents but she grew up an obedient girl and this was a customary tradition in their place. Her decision was not important, so, she conceded and accepted her parents decision.

Admittedly what we know ourselves to be and what we experience inside ourselves will always diverge from what the other people see in us and expect from us. But the gap opens up in a startling and painful way for persons on a mid-life journey. Even those closely related to the pilgrim will fail to understand and share what is happening. This is true in the life of so many people including Tessie. Tessie married a man who is exactly her opposite. His attitude in life was exactly the description that is described here as happening to many people. Tired of being a martyr wife, she hold on to God because of their children. She obediently served her good for nothing husband. This correspondent brings her husband naturally to a further feature of midlife journey: a profound crises of feelings. Such emotional crises vary from person to person. It will bring anything from anger to hatred through emptiness and longing to anything petrifying far and desperation. The crisis may focus primarily on some current personal failure, on unresolved conflicts from the past or on fears for the future. It included the famous walk in the woods when he broke down and wept. Tessie's life of being into the woods as a kaingero, a farmer was very good. But her life as a wife was filled with miseries and a state of being into the woods that she must struggle all the thorns, weeds etc. of being into the woods and sacrifice to remain steadfast and in the grace of God. Such expressive metaphors describe the need of her husband and also for Tessie for conversion. As her situation dares her to return to woods by her various and shady loves." These aqueous analogies accentuates the consequence of her incapacity to resist the very powerful passions of being in a state of being into the woods..

Whatever way, a powerful crises always blazes up as people are swept into a midlife journey. Midlife journey constitutes a quest for new meanings, fresh values and different goals. The ideals and values which have supported life so far no longer satisfy. In one way or another, persons on a midlife journey want more out of life. Questions come flooding at them. What have I done? Has my life been productive or stagnant? Would it be worthwhile doing it all over again? What is the more I want? Where did we come from? What

are we? Where are we going to? These are questions that midlife journey typically throws up.

But Tessie's husband still never gave up. The evil he did to himself and to many people started to bounce back to him. He got a number of dreadful illnesses. Until 'there is no way for him to survive.' At any moment of his life he will die." This is impasse, Tessie's husband has to go through. There is no way out, no way around, no rational escape from, what imprisons one, no possibilities in the situation. Everything is brought to a standstill, and any solution rationally attempted, any movement out, any next step, is cancelled, and the most dangerous temptation is to give up, to quit, to surrender to cynicism and despair. This is the face of the disappointment, disenchantment, hopelessness, and loss of meaning that encompassed her husband. He cannot change things. Any solution he attempts leads to further impasse. Every solution he envisages simply creates the narrowing of possibilities. There is no way out. The experience of a possibility is a dead end. It is the negative image. This is Tessie's husband experience of abandonment. The God of love that Jesus proclaimed is now on the cross seems terribly absent. What is left? Horrible darkness, fear, isolation. Despite of his evil deeds, some concerned people with faith brought him to the Divine Mercy at the location stated above. Miraculously, his body responded. He regained strength. Tagore is correct when he says: as long as a person is biologically healthy he remains unmindful of death. The quest for life necessitates facing the inevitability of death.

After her husband regained a little strength, his spiritual eye gives a very clear picture of himself. This time, he realized the evil he did and could no longer wrestle with God. His conscience summoned him and dumped him to the ground. He found himself before still another choice. He either can fight against or flee from the ambiguities and finitude of life holding himself captive to a sinful human condition and stagnating before the excruciating pain, disappointments and compromising circumstances. Or he may choose to trust in and to celebrate the creative power of the Spirit and grace in self and others. But, he found himself weeping humbly asking the Lord Mercy, Forgiveness and Compassion. As a result of this visualization, he repented for his sins and he died. Tessie was freed from this scorching fury of the sun and this avalanche and storms in her life temporarily ended. After a few years, she experienced stroke. It deformed her face particularly her eyes. It was paralyzed. She looks like a pirate begging God at Divine Mercy for healing.

Tessie's mid-life journey sobers her. She became terribly conscious of the mysteries of life, of God's omnipotence and her own emerging self. Tessie right now is in the last feature in the pattern of her midlife journey. Ideally, such journeys end with a lasting wisdom and a profound freedom. You can hardly believe that a bitch like Tessie's husband became a successful pilgrim fashioning enduring purposes for himself and knowing his existence to have become finally stabilized. He discovered a new center which integrates his life and reach out powerfully to others. What William James called "the divided self" becomes unified with and through a new understanding and a fresh energy. Meanwhile, Tessie experienced visualization. She was filled by the Holy Spirit. She was given the gift of vision. During the visualization process, she saw a violet and a white flower, then she saw Lord Jesus and Mama Mary. She felt the presence of God.

She was so teary eyed. She promised God to be devoted to Him and will always come back at Divine Mercy. After a few minutes. She opened her eyes. The visualization process is done and everything is back to normal. She was healed.

To describe this ideal ending of a midlife journey we could invoke the classic terminology of the purgative, illuminative, and unitive way. Men and women who cope faithfully with the challenges of a midlife journey are people who have suffered often a painful purgation, who have received deep enlightenment, and who are now united with themselves, with others and with God. Unfortunately, for many pilgrims on a midlife journey this last point may not be nearly as true to the degree that the other five are. A genuine journey's end never occur or may fail to bring a final resolution of the contentions. It is not that such pilgrims are ultimate failures and ruined forever but a true and powerful integrity may simply not come. Midlife becomes a regained equilibrium and deeper purposes for living, heralding the arrival of a new wisdom. This wisdom gives up some former dreams, lets some wild fancies die and accepts human finitude. This wisdom embraces the mysteries of the world's evil and goodness.

VISUALIZATION

The participants are taught to utilize visualization or imaginal processes in the thought form construction in their modes of prayer. Visualization is a meditative prayer, a form of therapy grounded upon the idea that the mind can have a real effect upon the total person. The person imagines (visualizes) the compassionate love of the Divine Mercy flowing into, within and over the whole body. The person forms a mental image of love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as a wave flowing over, gently washing and healing him or her. The same loving flow becomes a waterfall gently cascading through the head, flowing through every crevice of the person's body, healing the person's every wound.

It is a process of purposely engendering visual mental imagery. The participants are asked to close their eyes, clear their mind and relax. Prior to this activity, the participants were trained by blindfolding each one of them and makes use of their senses. It trains them to listen and discern. It is being open to God. Being blindfolded helps them to focus to experience the unique and personal manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Consequentially, it is beneficial physiologically, psychologically, emotionally and spiritually expediting the healing of wounds to the body, dissipating physical pain, alleviating excruciating and psychological pain. The participants are also asked to surrender themselves to God and avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is healing that boost the capacity to improve relationships with others.

It is a guided imagery. This is not about daydreaming and fantasies. The leader, usually, the official exorcist, guides the participants mental images to evoke and engender mental images, imaginative or mental content directly unfolding the emotive sphere of the participants. Anything aggravating physically dissipates. It exacerbates psychological traumas and intensifies disturbing emotive spheres. Such activity also exorcises intergenerational compulsions, occult activities and the likes. Intergenerational compulsions are very heavy especially if the very cause is an occult practice. This is the very reason why, all of the participants are asked to close their eyes, since they lack faculty of exorcism. It might bounce back to them. It does not simply precipitates physical comfort, cognitive clarity and emotional equanimity. The healing center

is ready for anything unlikely to occur such as possessions of evil spirits just in case there is a failure on the part of the participants to surrender themselves and their idolatry. Some Christians despite having said as Christians exhibits a dichotomy on their practices. In reality, they practice superstitious belief and idolatry using amulets, *anting-anting*, *tawas*, *medium*, *pabotbot*, *angoe*, etc. This activity is very sensitive necessitating maturity and healthy spiritual life among servant leaders. It goes beyond guiding the participants with just sound recording, video or audiovisual media, music and the likes. It goes beyond relaxation technique.

Because of the sensitivity of this activity, a day before the recollection, a Holy Mass is held for all the participants. On the very day that participants will be brought to the place, servants or prayer warriors started their duty already most especially while travelling going to the place. In the entire vicinity of the ground, prayer warriors are everywhere. Servants are everywhere assisting the participants. Saturday, the first day, the participants are welcomed. Before they could go to the chapel, the participants are asked to line up: one line for women, another line for men. They will be blindfolded. In this activity alone, healing starts. A participant, a full professor in a university always complained of migraine. She was formerly a Dean for the School of Veterinary Medicine and is now serving as a director. She humbly participated and she was healed instantly. While going to the chapel, they are taught to listen and follow the voice of their guide. Then, inside the chapel, the recollection starts. A lot of participants are already experiencing different manifestations causing them to really repent for their sins. Majority of them starts to shed tears asking the Lord to be compassionate to them. Healing takes place anytime.

Servants will be asking the participants the following: Who was touched by the Lord? Where they healed of their infirmities or debilitating illness? Did they see anything? Hear anything? What is the message?

Consequentially, visualization activates our creative subconscious engendering affirmative and creative viewpoints in life. It teaches our brain to readily perceive, activates the law of attraction and construct your life physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually. It is about improving our relationship with God and other people. So, visualization is about organizing our thoughts and maintaining deliverance. It goes hand in hand. Visualization allows you to **transform your beliefs, assumptions, and opinions** about the most important person in your life — YOU!

Why Divine Mercy?

God is a God of mercy and grace. God, however, is merciful to even the worst offenders, sinners, and law-breakers. This means that even though He knows of our guilt, He doesn't always issue the punishment deserved. The mercy of the Lord is not something that is given with measure. It is not something the Lord gives sometimes. He does not have mercy on us on a periodic basis but rather on a permanent basis. IT IS A CHARACTERISTIC OF HIS VERY NATURE. The following teachings on Divine Mercy is taken from the Encyclical "Misericordiae Vultus" of Pope Francis: Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy. We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart

of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness. At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father's action in our lives. God did not wish to leave humanity alone in the throes of evil. And so he turned his gaze to Mary, holy and immaculate in love (cf. *Eph* 1:4), choosing her to be the Mother of man's Redeemer. When faced with the gravity of sin, God responds with the fullness of mercy. Mercy will always be greater than any sin. "For his mercy endures forever." With our eyes fixed on Jesus and his merciful gaze, we experience the love of the Most Holy Trinity. This love has now been made visible and tangible in Jesus' entire life. The signs he works, especially in favour of sinners, the poor, the marginalized, the sick, and the suffering, are all meant to teach mercy. Everything in him speaks of mercy. Nothing in him is devoid of compassion. In the parables devoted to mercy, Jesus reveals the nature of God as that of a Father who never gives up until he has forgiven the wrong and overcome rejection with compassion and mercy. Just as he is merciful, so we are called to be merciful to each other. Finally, mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life.

CONCLUSION

Visualization is a meditative prayer, a form of therapy grounded upon the idea that the mind can have a real effect upon the total person. The person imagines (visualizes) the compassionate love of the Divine Mercy flowing into, within and over the whole body. The person forms a mental image

of love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as a wave flowing over, gently washing and healing him or her. The same loving flow becomes a waterfall gently cascading through the head, flowing through every crevice of the person's body, healing the person's every wound. For the efficacy of visualization, the person must really believe in God since God is a God of mercy and grace. God, however, is merciful to even the worst offenders, sinners, and law-breakers.

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