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# My Father's House

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P.O. Box 22, N. Moodus Road, Moodus, CT 06469 Phone (860) 873-1581 Fax: (860) 873-2357 1997

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## 12 Principles of the Spiritual Life

by Fr. Bill McCarthy, MSA

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1. **Let God Be God** ~ This is the first and the most important, Let God Be God. God is the Supreme Master of the Universe. He is the Potter, we are the Clay, He is the Creator, we are the Creatures, He is the Vine; we are the Branches, He is the Sun, we live in the Sunlight, He is the Ocean, we live in His Waters. ("In him we live and move and have our being"). So let God have His way. We do this by surrender. Let go of your plans, be open to His plan. Let go of your petty insights, be open to His wisdom. Let go of your vested interests, be open to His love. Let go of the small, be open to the large. Let go of the denominialial, be open to the universal (Catholic), let go of division, be open to unity - for all is one in him. He is simplicity itself, wisdom itself, holiness itself. Let go and let God ~ **Let God be God\*** You and I are not God. This is such a simple truth, but since Adam & Eve most people on this planet earth do not really believe it. We are perverted humanists, secularists practical pagans. We give God at times lip service but not our minds, our wills our hearts. We seek freedom from His restraint, His will, His plans. This brings all the sufferings, sins and evils of the world. So please **Let God Be God!**
2. **Let You Be His** ~ Since He is the source of everything, often consecrate yourself to him. Consecrate your mind and your heart; your will and your emotions; your time and your talent; your friends and your foes; your past and your future; your whole self and your life. Be willing to live a life of poverty, chastity, obedience. By making Jesus your treasure, you can be poor in spirit. By making Jesus your romance, you can be pure. By making Jesus your Lord, you can be obedient. Say this simple prayer: Dear Jesus to you I consecrate my mind (+**make the sign of the cross on your forehead**), my heart (+**make the sign of the cross on your breast**), my lips (+**make the sign of the cross on your lips**), my entire self (+**make the sign of the cross on each shoulder**), I am yours ~ Amen.
3. **Let God's Will be Yours** ~ To live in his Kingdom of the Divine Will is

the greatest holiness. Next to praising and worshipping God, the highest act of holiness is to strive to listen to, discern and obey the will of God in your life. God has a will for us his children. He has a plan. The greatest gift we can offer is the "obedience of faith" (cf. Romans 1:6, 1:5, & 16:26) - the total yes. Jesus always did the will of His Father. This was his "meat" his sustenance. Mary always did the will of God. The Saints were those who strive to do the will of God. Meditation, prayer and obedience are keys. Meditate on the person, presence, and teachings of Jesus. Let them penetrate your mind and heart. Then as Mary did ~ "Do what so ever he tells you" For Jesus said, "The wise man who builds his house upon the rock (Christ) is he who listens to the word of the Lord and OBEYS IT!" "If you love me, obey my commands." The obedience of faith is key. In Eden the one test, the one thing that established the sovereignty of God was obedience. Nothing was said of faith, hope, love, purity or patience. Obedience included all. The one thing that brought us back to the Tree of Life was the obedience of Christ and Mary. Through the disobedience of Adam and Eve we lost the Spirit. Through the obedience of Christ and Mary, we can refrain it - if only we, like them - obey.

4. **Let God's Voice Be Heard** ~ God is speaking to all of us all of the time. He speaks externally through the Covenant, the Bible, the Church, creation, signs, symbols, people and events. He speaks internally through inspired thoughts, our deepest intuitions, sometimes even through dreams and visions. The most oft repeated theme (20,000+

times) in the Bible, as that He speaks to us. Our prayers should often be "Speak Lord Your Servant is Listening." As we learn to "hear" the voice of our Shepherd, we come into His Flock, His Church, His Kingdom. The whole of the life and example of Jesus can be summed up in 2 words "Yes, Abba." Jesus always listened to, discerned and obeyed the voice of His Father (cf. John 5:19). This is the "life more abundantly" that He promised (John 10:10). For him and for us life is a filial and obedient relationship with the source of life. That is the Father. All life, all holiness comes from Him, through the Son in the Spirit. To listen to, to discern, to obey the voice of God is to be alive in his Kingdom.

5. **Let God's Kingdom Come** ~ As we listen to, obey and discern the will and voice of God, we are transplanted into a new kingdom, the realm of the Spirit where God is God and Jesus is Lord. We think thoughts inspired by his Spirit. We have desires enflamed by His love. We have lives empowered by His Spirit. Our wisdom, love and power is that of his kingdom. We become "poor in spirit", humble of heart, forgiving, loving, pure, childlike submissive as the Spirit of God rules our lives. This kingdom we find is now "within" us. We understand all the kingdom of God parables, for as Jesus taught. They can only be truly understood by those who stand - under Him, "He who belongs to God hears what God says" (John 8:47).
6. **Let His Body Be Eaten** ~ Jesus realizing that He was calling us to a supernatural life gave us supernatural food. He said, "*With all the earnestness I possess I tell you*

*this, unless you feed on the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood you have no life within you. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him. Just as the Living Father sent me and I live because of him, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. (John 6:53-57)* Jesus is the bread of our life, our very sustenance. Every time we receive His body and blood at holy Mass we become what we receive. We become bone of His bone, and flesh of his flesh, humility of his humility, love of his love. We become as bread that is broken for a darkened world. Our lives live out our Eucharistic celebration as we say to those we know, love and meet along the way, "This is my body, (my life), for you." This is my blood for you."

7. **Let His Love be Shown** ~ What would God's Kingdom look like if you drew a picture of it. Would it look like a bunch of monks praying? A room of students at a Bible School? A group of people in a Court Room? Or, a family around a table? The last is the closest to the truth, because what God is doing upon earth is creating family His way. This is the covenant, "I will be your God and you will be my people", my family the Hebrew means. The heart of God is that God is a family, a trinity of persons loving one another, deferring to one another, delighting in one another, respecting one another. That is what God wants of us who He created into His "image and likeness", "Let us create man (and woman) into our image and likeness" so "male and female God created them." God calls us to

love one another with the height, depth, length and breath of His love, as Jesus taught "Love one another as I have loved you." We can not do this without His Spirit. When we do this, however, mankind for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in history will have discovered fire!

8. **Let His Mother Be Honored**~ Through Jesus (The New Adam) and Mary (The New Eve) we gain our new life. We are now in the family of God, new creatures by grace. We have God as our Father and Mary as our Mother. On the cross Jesus gave Mary to John and to us, when He said "Behold Your Mother." This is confirmed in Rev. 12:17 where it says, "Satan angry at the woman (Mary) goes to war on the rest of her children, that is, those who keep God's commandments of Jesus and bear witness to Jesus' name." "All generations shall call (her) blessed" (Luke 1:48) God asks us to honor our fathers and mothers. In preeminent way He asks us to honor Mary His Mother, the Mother of all the living.
9. **Let His Spirit Guide** ~ God the Father and the Son have sent their Spirit to enlighten our minds as we meditate and pray, to enflame our hearts as we receive the Eucharist and love, and to direct and guide our lives as we are open to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Christ within us wishes to guide us each and every step of the way. The Spirit will enlighten our minds as to what to do; will enflame our hearts with the desire to do it. This will guide our lives, telling us not only what to say and do, who to see, but also where not to go. We are not alone on a minefield filled with dangers. God's Spirit is with us to warn us of all impending danger. God leads us "not into temptation, but delivers us

from Evil" if we follow his directions, "My word shall be a lamp unto your feet." He will guide every step of our journey lest we stray into sin and danger. The Spirit brings the gifts of wisdom and understanding, compassion and forgiveness, healing and power. The fruits of the Spirit's presence will be "love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness and self control" (cf Gal. 5:22) "So I say live by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16).

10. **Let His Fire Start** ~ Jesus said, "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already enkindled" (Luke 12:45). We sing - "Come Holy Spirit Let The Fire Fall," and "Fire, Fire, Fire. . . Fire fell on me; as the day of Pentecost fire fell on me." The Spirit's coming on Pentecost was accompanied by flames of fire. The Spirit of God wants to fire us up, to excite us, to set our hearts aglow. We are too lethargic, too lukewarm, too lazy, too laid back. There is an urgency in the things of God, "Those that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength, they shall ride as if on wings of eagles. They shall run but not grow weary. They shall walk but not grow faint" (Is. 40:31). When we ride the new wind of the Spirit our lives will be inspired - our minds will be enlightened and our hearts will be on fire. We will understand what the disciples on the road to Emmaus meant when they said "Were not our hearts burning inside us, as He walked with us along the way" (Lk 4:32). Our prayer will be "Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of us faithful and enkindle within us the fire of your love."

11. **Let His Mission Unfold** ~ Once we are fired up Christians we will

spread the fire. We shall discover the truth of the evangelization maxim. "If you wish to attract a crowd, set yourself on fire." People are attracted to inspired people, whose faces are radiant with the love of Christ. "The love of Christ will impel us to spread His Gospel. His great commission "to make disciples of all nations", to spread his kingdom, to be his witness - will be our command. The love of Christ - burning inside us will become diffusive of itself. And the fire will spread; the kingdom will expand and more and more men and women will be brought to Christ, will be saved and healed and inspired themselves.

12. **Let God Have the Glory** ~ Once we like mirrors reflect the fire of God's love, once we become the light of the world, men and women will give glory to God." "To God be the Glory" as the hymn sings. "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give the glory" the psalmist admonished. We are here on earth to give glory to God. Whether we eat or drink, we do it to glorify the Lord. We will spend our eternity saying "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Hosts." We are surrounded even now by a heavenly chorus of saints and angels giving all the glory, the honor, the adoration and the praise to God. *Let God have the Glory.* \*\*\*\*\*

# THE UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS

By Father Bill McCarthy, MSA

## MY FATHER'S HOUSE

### THE CALL

Why are we here? What is life about? What is the true purpose for our existence, as human beings and as Christians—this is the crucial question. Only God through His Revelation can answer it infallibly. He answers it both in the Old and New Testaments. Our calling and our destiny is to share in the very Trinitarian life of God, to become “partakers of the Divine Nature.” (2 Pet 2:3-4)

### TO SHARE GOD'S OWN LIFE

Yes, God created us so that God could share his own Trinitarian life with us. Just as Father, Son, & Spirit:

Delight in one another

Love one another

Reverence one another

Defer to one another

Rejoice in one another

Communicate to one another

In infinite love, support and reverence that is what the Father wants to communicate to us — to make us adopted children of God. This is an awesome calling. Yet God “before the foundation of the world” chose us in Christ to be holy and blameless in God’s sight—to be full of grace—God’s own life.

### THE COVENANTS

For this reason God prepared several covenants—each were far reaching than the last.

#### Covenant Time-Line/Salvation History

Time-Era:	???	c 2500BC	c 2000BC	c 1500BC	c 1000BC	c 500BC	3BC-30AD
Mediator:	Adam	Noah	Abraham	Moses	David	Ezra	Christ
Role:	Husband	Father	Chieftain	Judge	King	Priest	High Priest/King
Structure:	Marriage	Household	Tribe	Nation	Kingdom	Priesthood	Church
Sign:	Sabbath	Rainbow	Circumcision	Passover	Throne	Temple	Eucharist

Notice that each covenant had a simple male father, priestly head. In his beautiful and powerful book, *A Father Who Keeps His Promises*, Scott Hahn, a former Methodist minister and now a powerful Catholic teacher and evangelist, shows how each of the Old Testament covenants embraced an ever-widening circle of people until they became universal or catholic. This was God’s master plan of salvation – to create a universal covenant of people – a Catholic Church.

St. Paul speaks of this when he says, “To me certainly the least of all the saints this grace has been given to proclaim to all of you the unfathomable mystery of the love of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past, was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph 3:8-11).

(Rom 8:13); thus being led by the Spirit (Rom 8:14). We can be sons (v. 14, 15, 16); more so joint heirs sharing His treasures (v.17) and awaiting the redemption of our bodies (v.23). The Spirit can help us with our daily problems (v.26) so that we can know that everything that happens, happens for our good (v.28) even our problems and weaknesses.

The purpose of all this is that our lives can be conformed to the image of Christ (v.29 cf 2 Cor 3:18). Knowing that God is always on our side (v.31). Christ will plead our cause, never condemning us (v.34).

Through the spirit of the love of Christ (v. 35-36), we can be more than conquerors (v.37) entering into a Kingdom from which no one or nothing in the heavens or on earth can separate us (v.38). These twenty-three provisions of Life in the Spirit provide Paul's best description of acting like Jesus.

What 1 Corinthians, chapter 1 is to wisdom and 1 Corinthians, chapter 13 is to love, Romans 8 is to action. Thus, we have the mind and heart and hands of Christ. We are His "ambassadors" of truth, love and action.

For Paul, the believer has the responsibility of letting Christ work in him and through him, to allow his character to be molded by God according to the pattern of Jesus, not as something which we achieve for ourselves (works), but as something which by openness to the Spirit of Christ, he allows Christ to work through him (grace and fruit). For Paul, everything is "*gift and grace.*" "By the grace of God, I am what I am" (cf 2 Cor 6:1; 2 Cor 4:6).

## **THE CROSS**

In order to live this resurrected life, the cross of Jesus is central and essential. We must take up our cross daily and follow in Christ's footsteps. St. Paul teaches, "I preach Christ and him crucified. The power of God and the wisdom of God," and enigma to the rationalists and a stumbling block to surface believers. And yet Paul is emphatic, "Let that mindset be in you which is also in Christ Jesus. That even though he was God, he did not see Divinity itself as something to be clung to but rather he emptied himself. Took the form of our lowly nature and became obedient, than obedient again—obedient to even death on the cross. We must die to the old nature and its sinfulness in order to live a resurrected life by God's spirit.

### *The Spirit and the Cross – Flesh To Be Crucified*

Therefore, according to Paul, the flesh has to be crucified. "With Christ, I am nailed to the cross, so I live now, not I but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). The cross, which is "a stumbling block for the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles" (1 Cor 1:23) is for Paul "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (v.24).

Human power can't produce the works of God "lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power" (v.17); nor can it produce His wisdom "for the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing" (v.18)

Paul preaches only one thing—"Jesus Christ and him crucified"; "even if an angel from heaven should preach another gospel, let him be anathema."

Unless a man *dies* to his own wisdom, Paul says he has no wisdom. It is God's wisdom charismatically given that alone instructs (v.13). "We have not received the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us" (v.12). "This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom" (this has been crucified), "but in words taught by the Spirit" (v.13).

The life received by grace, from the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit is the one and only life for Paul (Gal 2:20).

The cross is the flip side of *life in the Spirit* for Paul. All that human nature could do without grace, without the Spirit, avails absolutely nothing. If not, then Christ “died for nothing” (Gal 2:21). Only that which is produced by the Spirit, produces “life” (Rom 8; 2 Cor 3:4).

In short, the life of Christ produced by the Spirit of Christ is the life of grace. Anything else must be crucified. All that is of self, by self, even self for God must be “crucified.” “We who have been baptized have been baptized into His death” (Rom 6:3). We were buried with Him through baptism in His death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of His Father, we too might live a new life in Him” (v.4).

The Spirit of God stands in contrast to the flesh, the world and the devil. It is only as these are crucified and the flesh has nothing to glory in that the Spirit will work. As Christ was empty to be filled, so we also must be (Phil 2:5ff). The cross turns everything upside down. Man’s pride is turned into God’s humility. Man’s hatred is turned into God’s love. Man’s selfishness is turned into God’s charity. In short, man’s ways are turned into God’s ways. Are carnal search for money, pleasure and power are changed into an acceptance of poverty, chastity and obedience as Jesus becomes our treasure, our romance and our lord. That which divides earth from heaven is the cross. The things of the world grow dim and the light of its marvelous grace. It is precisely in and through the sacraments, especially those of confession and communion, that Christ gives us the ability to die to selfishness and sin and to rise with him in holiness and in virtue.

### **CONFESSION**

That is why the first public act of Jesus on Easter Sunday evening was to appear to his apostles and give to them the power to forgive sins. “As the father has sent me, now I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. Who’s sins you shall forgive they are forgiven.” Each time one goes to confession and humbles himself before the Merciful Savior, they receive three awesome, miraculous graces. First, every bit of sin and guilt is washed clean through the blood of the Lamb administered through Christ’s priests. Second, all bitterness, hatred and unforgiveness is let go of as we penitents forgive those who have hurt us. Finally, we are given the awesome, fantastic power to forgive ourselves. That is to stand in righteousness knowing that we are entirely cleansed so that we can get on with our lives.

### **COMMUNION**

All of this leads to the summit of Christian life and the greatest of all the sacraments, the Eucharist or Holy Communion. In fact, the greatest was to worship the Father in spirit and truth is to celebrate Mass and to receive His precious body, blood, soul and divinity. At the Mass, we offer the highest praise to the Father. At this sacred liturgy we join all the angels and saints in their continuous act of worship to the Father, with the Son in the power of the Spirit.

#### *The New Passover*

The Mass is the Passover fulfilled and renewed. The Pascal lamb has been replaced by Jesus, who is the lamb of God for by His shed blood, we pass over from death to life. The bitter herbs have been replaced by the bitter agony of Christ’s death on the cross. At the last supper, Jesus said, “I have desired to eat this Passover with you.” Then he took the bread, gave thanks, blessed it and said, “This is my body, do this in remembrance of me.” Likewise, after he supped, he took the chalice of wine, blessed it and said, “Take this and drink all of you, this is the chalice of my blood, the new and everlasting covenant. This shall be shed for you and for all so that sins might be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.” In and through the Mass, Jesus has offered to us an everlasting sharing in the Pascal mystery, that is, His death and resurrection. We share His death to selfishness and sin and His resurrection to new life and hope.