



My Father's House

P. O. Box 22, N. Moodus Road, Moodus, CT 06469

Phone: (860) 873-1581

Fax: (860) 873-2357

1998

Fifteen Principles of the Spiritual Life

by Fr. Bill McCarthy, MSA

1. Let God Be God.

This is the first and the most important principle. 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 Son, we live in the Sonlight. 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 denominational, 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 because of the sin of Adam and Eve, most people 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 or 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, consecrate yourself to Him often. 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 and 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 heart), 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 Your Will.

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 to 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 "food", His sustenance. Mary always did the will of God. The saints were those people who strove 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 whatsoever He tells you. For Jesus said, "The wise man who build 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 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 regain 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 often repeated theme (over 20,000 times in the bible) is 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 two words, "Yes, Abba." Jesus always listened to, discerned and obeyed the voice of His Father (cf Jn 5:19). This is the "life more abundantly" that He promised (Jn 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 the 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 and 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" (Jn 8:47).

6. Let His Blood Cleanse.

Jesus comes with a Kingdom of love and mercy. He comes to save us, to forgive us, to cleanse us of all guilt and sin as we repent and are willing to forgive those who have hurt us. He cleanses us through His Blood shed for us upon the cross.

There is great power in that blood. He has given the Church the keys to forgive and unbind. On Easter Sunday evening after His horrendous death and glorious resurrection, he appeared to his first priests, His apostles, showed them the wounds of His crucifixion, and then said, "As the father has sent me, I now send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven. Whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." Just as in the Old Testament, it was the priest who poured the blood of the lamb upon the Mercy Seat in the holy of holies. So also, in the New Testament, the blood of the lamb is administered through the priest.

Everytime we go to confession, three miracles take place. First, every bit of sin and guilt is washed away. Second, all bitterness, hatred and unforgiveness is let go of -- especially if we realize the truth of Christ's words, "Your sins are forgiven," spoken through the priest. Third, we are given the awesome power to forgive ourselves and get on with our lives. When you realize that over 95% of all people walk around loaded with guilt, this sacrament is powerful. Most people repress guilt, deny it, rationalize it, or project it. Yet only this sacrament can cleanse and purge it. This is a powerful key that His blood cleanses.

7. 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 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 (Jn 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."

8. Let His Church Be Revealed.

The Kingdom incarnate that Christ has come to bring to earth is the one holy, apostolic, covenanted people for all men and women. That is His Church, which Jesus has left as the pillar and standard of truth (cf 1 Tim 3:15). Because God is one, this Church is one. Because God is holy, this Church has the means of being holy. Because God is apostolic, this Church is apostolic. And because God loves everyone, this Church is universal or Catholic. Because the God we worship is a family -- that is the trinity of persons loving one another, deferring to one another and delighting in one another -- this Church is His family upon earth (cf. The Joy of Being Catholic, by Fr. Bill McCarthy). Jesus said to Peter, "You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church." Jesus prayed that we all may be one. "As the Father is in him and he is in the father" (cf Jn 17:20-21). And that there would be but "one flock and one shepherd" (Jn 10:16).

9. Let His Vicar -- the Pope -- Be Obeyed.

Since Jesus built His Church upon Peter and His successors, to whom he would give the keys of the Kingdom, we are to live in union with the pope. Knowing the weakness of human nature and our tendency toward disunity, Christ founded the new covenanted people upon one male head. In each of

the previous covenants, with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Ezra, and David, He had done the same. In Isaiah 22, David, the king of Israel, gives to his prime minister the keys to the earthly kingdom along with the authority to open doors and close doors. Using this symbolism of giving the keys of the new kingdom to a prime minister, Jesus gave the keys to Peter. Peter alone, as prime minister, and his successors are the final authority here on earth to bind and to lose. Therefore, we have to obey him in matters of faith and morals.

10. 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 in prayer? 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" -- which in Hebrew means family. 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 breadth of His love. As Jesus taught, "Love one another as I have loved you." We cannot do this without His Spirit. When we do this, however, mankind, for the second time in history, will have discovered fire!

11. 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 Revelations 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" (Lk

1:48). God asks us to honor our fathers and mothers. In a preeminent way, He asks us to honor Mary, His Mother, the Mother of all the living.

12. 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 and 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).

13. Let His Fire Start.

Jesus said, "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already enkindled" (Lk 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 who 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 weak" (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 the faithful and enkindle within us the fire of your love."

14. 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. They will be saved and healed and inspired themselves.

15. 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!