

faith." - I St. John 5:4.

Having this genuine help, this help which overcomes the world, then we can have genuine hope.

Hope

"Hope is a wealth of hidden riches. Hope is a treasure of assurance of the treasure in store for us." - St. John Climacus.

What can be said of the sweetness of genuine hope? It is one of the three great theological virtues. It is the fruit of that faith which overcomes the world, and it is the repository of the power of charity. Observe, dear soul, the pervasive despair which engulfs so much of modern society. It is nearly impossible not to be moved and influenced by it. But let our hope operate in genuine charity and in genuine honesty, that grace may all the more abound.

Do you see, dear soul, how our four "H"s of the spiritual life lead one to the other and can make the soul a fertile ground for the reception of the Word of God, so that it may not only take root, but also that it "beareth fruit, and yieldeth one a hundred-fold, and another sixty, and another thirty." - St. Matthew 13:23.

As we enter into this especially solemn and grace-filled period of the year, keep these few words in your heart, dear soul.

I had said I intended to keep this very brief. If you take nothing at all else away from what we have looked at today, at least take those four "H" words: Honesty. Humility. Help. Hope.

I believe they will serve us well on our own walk of grace.

Let us take these words to heart.

For books that will help you advance in the spiritual life go to Christ the King Library at

www.ChristtheKingLibrary.com

The "Little Way" of Spiritual Childhood: According to the Life and Writings of Blessed Therese de l'Enfant Jesus Teresa of Jesus. \$13.95

Man's Contract With God in Baptism, Saint John Eudes, author of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Admirable Heart of Mary \$9.95

Charity: A Commentary on I Corinthians 13, by Saint Alphonsus Ligouri \$9.99

The Practice of the Presence of God: With the Maxims of Brother Lawrence \$6.00

Spiritual Maxims \$7.95

Christ the King Library
829 NE Chester
Topeka, Kansas 66616-1352


Christ the King
LIBRARY

Essential Building Blocks of the Spiritual Life

I thought it would do to offer just one last reminder of the essential building blocks of the spiritual life as we head into the remembrance of the Passion and the Resurrection. Inestimable graces are offered to you in a special way during this time; prepare yourself well to avail yourself of such blessings!

You may have heard me talk about this before. If so, bear with me again. Repetition often is a great help. It also helps if you can simplify what it is that you're repeating. So we'll simplify it to four letters, all of which are the same.



If you grew up in certain areas of the United States within the past century or so, you have probably encountered at one time or another an



organization known as the 4-H Club. While today, the 4-H Club concerns itself with a fairly broad mission of "engaging youth to reach their fullest potential while advancing the field of youth development," most often the thoughts of anyone who experienced the 4-H Club in the twentieth century are drawn to thoughts of agriculture. The 4-H originally was founded with the purpose of providing rural youth with instruction and practical experience in improving agricultural practices and in home-making. The name of the organization reflected the words of its original motto: "Head, heart, hands, and health."

Today, I want to introduce (or re-introduce) you, dear soul, to another set of four "H" words which will stand you on good ground for the work of growing in the life of grace, cultivating the very Word of God within your soul. Keep these words in your mind, and then put them to work with your heart.

What is our 4-H of spiritual life? Simply put: honesty, humility, help, and hope. These are the four great dispositions and acts which you will continually encounter and require as you grow in the life of grace. Let us very briefly look at each one and how they grow from each other.

Honesty

"Honesty is innocent thought, a genuine character, speech that is neither artificial nor premeditated." - St. John Climacus.

Honesty is the first step of the spiritual life. It is absolutely indispensable. Without genuine honesty, which is nothing more than being truthful with oneself and with others before God and in the light of God's law, then no spiritual growth can be made whatsoever. Without honesty, you open no ground within

your heart for the Word to take root. You are like the the ground along the wayside of which our Lord spoke, from which the seed the sower had sown is taken and eaten by the birds of the air. Without genuine honesty, you are not yet even on the path of spiritual renewal.

Resolve to cultivate honesty within yourself, within your heart, within your soul. Do this through frequent examination of conscience. Do this through frequent remembrance of the presence of God. Do this in meditation, in prayer, and in fasting.

You will find that genuine honesty cultivates true humility within you. This leads us to our second "H."

Humility

"Pride makes us forget our sins, for the remembrance of them leads to humility." - St. John Climacus.

Genuine humility is nothing more than honesty in action. When we see ourselves clearly in the light of God's grace and God's law, we recognize our own fallen nature, our own sinfulness, our own brokenness. But humility is not given as an end unto itself.

False humility wishes to be recognized, to be commented upon. True humility acts upon the soul to lead us to greater understanding.

False humility will leave the soul as the rocky soil of the way of which our Lord spoke in the parable of the sower. It has a lowliness to it, and it "receiveth [the Word] with joy. Yet hath he not root in himself, but is only for a time: and when there arise tribulation and persecution because of the word, he is presently scandalized." - St. Matthew 13:20-21.

Genuine humility will cause us to deepen the soil of our own hearts, that the Word may take

root. Genuine humility, however, will also show that we do not have this power solely by ourselves. Rather, in order to deepen the soil of the heart, we absolutely must call upon God for help. And this leads us to our third "H."

Help

"O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me." - Psalm 69:2.

The desert Fathers made a habit of praying that verse from the Psalms in their hearts throughout the day. You will find that even to this day, it introduces the hours of the Divine Office throughout the day. The Church, as a good mother, frequently reminds her children of the necessity to call upon the help which only God can give.

First and foremost, if we have been honest, and then operating in genuine honesty we have cultivated true humility, we now pass to calling for genuine help - that help which is found especially in the Sacraments. It is through living in the state of grace, through frequenting the sacrament of Penance, through frequent reception of Holy Communion, that God communicates to you the help which you so sorely need.

Without this help, our hearts are become like the soil upon which the seed springs up, but then is choked by the weeds. "And he who received the seed among thorns, is he that heareth the word, and the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke up the word, and he becometh fruitless." - St. Matthew 13:22.

Note that the help which is necessary is that help which can overcome the world. This is found only in Christ. "For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory which overcometh the world, our