

Simple ≠ Easy

REFLECTIONS FROM FR. ROSS



This is a continuation of last week's reflection about simplicity. Did you get a chance to step and reflect for a moment on life—your life? How do you rate your life in terms of simplicity and/or complexity? Do you try to live simply? Is simplicity a focus or do you just let life happen to you? Is your life a response or a reaction?

Attitudes: God made us to grow and change. Consequently, I am called to shift my attitudes in the direction of God. As I come, move closer to God, my attitudes change; they become more whole and holy—and more simple. I begin to look at all my attitudes and examine their alignment or not with my main focus which is on God. As I grow in the Spirit I begin placing higher value on things of God than I do on things of the world.

Perceptions: The way we “take in” the world—the way we “see” things—is called perception. *How* we perceive something is more important than *what* we perceive. Simplicity of perception means trying to see the world through the eyes of Christ. We obviously don't know exactly how Christ sees something, yet we can make use of Scripture and Christian tradition to get an idea of how he did/does. Looking through this “lens” we see more clearly the abundant love that surrounds us. The veins of a leaf take on a new beauty, and a simple “thank you” can touch our hearts. The simple things of life become the magnificent things in life. We are also able to see that there really is a harmony in life.

Thinking: Thinking is the procedure we use to take the perceived information and “crunch” it together to make sense of it. When we think we evaluate, assess and judge. Do we do so according to the world, or use simplicity and evaluate, assess and judge according to the ways of God? What someone calls “failure” another might call “success.” There are many forces which can impact and complicate our world, whether from the inside or outside—our thinking is one of these strongest forces. Simplicity

helps us open our minds and our hearts so that we can think positively and accurately, i.e., we think with the mind of God.

Feeling: Our feelings determine so much of how we act. Yet, our feelings are only reactions to our thoughts. Simplicity of feeling means that we strive for love in our emotions. When we believe in love, see in love, and think in love, then we will *feel* in love. Feelings of anxiety, self-pity, distress, sadness, and self-abasement are signs that we are living too complex of a life. Jesus wants us to be happy, uplifted, and inspired in our emotions. Christ experienced the full range of positive and negative feelings. Yet, all the while, he was functioning in simplicity and singleness of heart. He was focused on love: love for his Father and love for us.

Choice: The choices we make are based on our attitudes, perceptions, thinking and feelings. For example, we choose the “pain” of saving money now in exchange for the freedom it will bring us in the future. Simplicity of decision or choice means that we use a single measure to determine our strategy in a situation; the best choice of action for us. Again, this simple measure is love. This is the “how” we grow in wholeness and holiness; this is what will bring us what we are looking for; this is how we find our true selves. We make conscious choices to remain obedient to the law of love. Someone said that this is just common sense—the common sense of God.

Action: This is where we put our money where our simplicity is—what we actually do. Our actions reveal who we truly are at our core, since our actions are a direct reflection of the above five steps. To what degree do we “use” simplicity in our attitudes, perceptions, thinking, feeling, and choices? When we use simplicity as the guiding principle of our personality, then we *automatically* act in simplicity. The act of simplicity, the loving act, may be an ordinary act, but it can (and usually does) have dramatic results. To be continued..... fr.ross@verizon.net

