

July 15, 2020

Reflection – Child’s Play

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Isaiah 10:5-7, 13-26

Matthew 11:25-27

How fortunate that we have St. Bonaventure, a Franciscan, honored today. The joyful simplicity of Franciscan spirituality fits the context of our readings, though initially through *contrast*.

The Isaiah reading’s powerful imagery shows the arrogance of “By my own power I have done it” and with the image of the giant and the nest-snatcher. He exposes that blind pride with, “Will the saw exult itself above him who wields it?”

Jesus put it in plain prose, “You have no power that is not given from above.”

So, where does this lead us? To the Gospel. And, *in contrast*, the Gospel leads us to humble simplicity, and childlike faith.

“I give praise to you, Abba God, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike.”

I appreciated Fr. Donald Cozzens’ reflection that people who are “*childlike*, no matter their age, know how to *play*. The childlike don’t take themselves too seriously. They know how to *share* and to simply *delight* in the presence of others ... (and in nature’s gifts and mysteries). (They have a) *joyful openness* to the wonder and promise of *life*. ...”

He continues on about Pope Francis: “from time to time we catch glimpses of his playfulness, his absolute trust in the mercy of God, his deep respect for the holiness of creation, his humble simplicity.”¹

There is no denying all the difficulties that confront us, *and* that some antidotes to being overwhelmed are needed as well. So, when I found this new spiritual practice for these days, I wanted to share it with you.

The practice is called G.L.A.D. It stands for “**G**rateful, **L**earned, **A**ccomplished and **D**elighted.” The author says, “It is a spiritual practice that works powerfully to create gratefulness, bring life lessons to your *awareness*, provide a sense of accomplishment and cultivate greater delight and joy in you. ...” The practice is usually “done at the end of the day – to reflect on these four attributes ... and writing them down to make them more real. ... You simply *fill in the blank* of each of these statements.”

Here is how it goes: Each word has its own line. G L A D (as below).

Let’s do a quick try. Think of yesterday and fill in the blank.

G I am **G**rateful for _____(example)

L I **L**earned _____
A I **A**ccomplished _____
D I **D**elighted in _____

I hope you try this for the rest of the week. Notice what happens. You'll be glad you did.²

May the God of PLAY be with you,
amusing you and exciting you,
bringing you to wonder, appreciation, and
calling you to be free and spontaneous. ...
May you celebrate the presence of God in your life
and may you *be* that presence to all you meet.
May the blessing of PLAY be on you.
Amen.³

¹ Fr. Donald Cozzens; *GUTD*, July 15, 2020

² P. Fleming, S. Lauber-Fleming, V. Schmidt; *Soul Light for the Dark Night*, July 16

³ Maxine Shonk; *Book of Blessings*