That Inherent Dignity — Priceless!

by Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

An illustrative story:

Just before we are born, our souls are in God’s embrace to be blessed, cherished, and gifted. God gently and lovingly kisses each soul and breathes God-life into the soul, creating us in God’s image and likeness. This kiss is the divine spark of life and the longing for relationship with God that lasts forever.

Dignity recognizes that everyone has value intrinsic to their humanity. The priceless worth of the human spirit is a pure gift to be nurtured and treasured. The dignity of the person is the starting point for a moral vision of society. It is the cornerstone of Catholic Social Teaching. It is at the heart of spirituality.

Whenever mutual reverence and respect are at work, the dignity of the person is honored. When an attitude of superiority, focus on power, control and self-righteousness flourish, the dignity of all is battered.
Reflection on the Gospel validates that the starting point for interaction and relationship is reverence for all as a precious gift of God’s great love. In the manner of Jesus, I am invited to foster spiritual awareness that awakens me to the “face of God” uniquely revealed in each person. When seeing with sacred eyes, I am drawn to honor the dignity of all by being receptive to personal and cultural self-identity and recognizing their unique qualities. Deep listening to one another gives way toward mutual understanding. I am challenged to be welcoming and inclusive in a way that fosters belonging and community. Together, we strive to create an environment where safety and security prevail, everyone is treated with fairness, given the benefit of the doubt, and space is opened for hope and possibilities.

Whenever human frailty takes hold of me, with the help of God’s grace I can work toward understanding, forgiveness and, at the very least, cordiality. I seek to act responsibly, willing to apologize and forgive when dignity is wounded. Not easy, yet so essential to self-respect and spiritual growth.

Dignity is foundational and gives witness to God’s unconditional love and fidelity.

**For Reflection:**

- *What is the sense of my own dignity?*

- *How do I honor, restore, and foster dignity in myself and in those I encounter?*

- *Who and what stretches and challenges me regarding the dignity of all persons without distinction?*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exploring the Boundaries of Spiritual Direction</th>
<th>OCTOBER 17th, 2020 9AM – 12:30PM, PST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offered Virtually</td>
<td>REGISTER HERE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presented by: Steve Bruce, Gayle Heuser, Sr. Greta Ronnigen and Leia Smith. This workshop will be a conversation about what “spiritual direction” looks like in four distinct communities – incarcerated, homeless, hospice, and sheltered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Through the Eyes of Love: A Spirituality of Visio Divina</th>
<th>NOVEMBER 21st, 2020 9AM – 12:30PM, PST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offered Virtually</td>
<td>REGISTER HERE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presented by: Father David Robinson, SJ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Images of God in the Old Testament: Problems and Prospects</th>
<th>JANUARY 16th, 2021 9AM – 12:30PM, PST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offered Virtually</td>
<td>REGISTER HERE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presented by: Dr. Daniel Smith-Christopher and Sr. Christine Hilliard, CSJ. This presentation aims to take a clear-eyed look at the troubling images of God in the Old Testament and also offer some hopeful prospects, of engaging with these images of God.
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