



Pathways of Grace

Seattle 2019

The Order of the Ascension

*I will arise, and in the strength of love
Pursue the bright track ere it fade away,
My Saviour's pathway to His home above.*

John Keble

About Pathways of Grace

The workshops are all designed to assist us understand, and enter into, the pathways of grace.

The Presence

How are we to recognize the presence of God, of Angels and Archangels and the whole company of heaven? How might we become more sensitive to God's presence with us?

The Pathways of Grace workshops assume that we're called to place ourselves where God is known to be present – in Eucharist and Office, in Sacraments and Word, in silence and solitude. We don't get to manipulate God's presence. It's not for us to make God appear and act in life. Our part is to put ourselves in the Pathways of Grace.

All the Time

We are working on the assumption that God's presence is common not rare.

God is at our right hand [Ps 16:8], God is not far from each of us [Acts 17:27]
In him we live and move and have our being [Acts 17:28] The kingdom of God is within you (or among you, or in your midst) [Luke 17:21]

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

In our daily life – in family, with friends and strangers, in joy and despair. In all of our life – God is present, standing alongside us, dwelling within us. A presence that at times we feel.

And as God's presence is so near and ordinary we may learn to better recognize it; to notice it in the "people, things and circumstances of life."

Accepting

We are not trying to conjure up holiness or spiritual feelings or a sense of the mystical. Our faith is not about doing magic. It's not about controlling and manipulating God, the angels and saints. The church is about saying magical incantations that will generate happiness and success.

It is about accepting, receiving, noticing, and loving. Finally, it is about repenting, believing, and loving.

Regula

Regula or "rule" is about living our spiritual life with a pattern. Not a random or self-constructed list of rules but a prayer life with a shape; a shape that has emerged from the long experience and wisdom of the People of God.

It is the Prayer Book Pattern, the threefold rule of prayer – Eucharist, Daily Office, Personal Devotions. It is the underpinning of a faithful prayer life.

This pattern, this shape, is the foundational pathway.

Regula - Daily practice, discipline, what is objective – grounds us in God's ways. So, we may notice the moments of holy disclosure and presence. The *regula* is essential. It is how we stay grounded in faith and practice; it is how we become sensitive to the ways of God.

Uniqueness

And yet, the spiritual life is not just *regula*. It is also about our unique and personal experience of God. Both/and not either/or.

So, there are pathways unique to each person. Pathways that allow you to accept the closeness of God.

Balance

So, we have *regula* and personal experience. Each of us needs some balance that fits our temperament, circumstance, and need to grow and have our heart enlarged.

A balance -

- Of *regula* and uniqueness
- Transcendent and immanent
- Unknowable and indwelling
- Our God and my God
- We believe and I believe

Practical guidance

Whether the pathway we are exploring is of the *regula* or of personal experience – our hope is to offer realistic and useful assistance. This is applied theology.

Christian life is social, centered upon the corporate liturgy and expressed in love for the neighbor; it is also intensely personal, a relationship between God and unique individuality. Martin Thornton