



Oblate Media and Communication

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Outline/Leaders Guide for

Living in the Image and Likeness of God: Its Struggle and its Glory

The struggle for a deeper maturity and for a healthier appropriation of the Imago Dei within us.

SESSION ONE

The Struggle – Our Congenital Discontent and its deep root

- i) At the center of our experience – a fundamental “*dis-ease*”
- ii) Some helpful expressions of it:

*Plato and the Greeks – “divine madness”
“nostos”

“We are fired into life with a madness that comes from the gods and has us believe that we can have a great love, can perpetuate our own seed, and can contemplate the divine.”

- Augustine – “loneliness”
- Qoheleth – “timelessness”
- Anne Frank – “restlessness”
- Doris Lessing – “1000 volts”
- Albert Camus – “inside and undersized universe”
- Hinduism – “nostalgia for the infinite”
- Shakespeare – “immortal longings”

- iii) Characteristics of it

- insatiability
- perpetual disquiet... “madness”

Its Deep Root – The “image and Likeness of God” inside of us

- i) The Hebrew scriptures: Being in God’s “*image and likeness*”

- The concept – “*Selem & Demut*”
- As illustrated in King David

- ii) In the Gospels – Jesus as God’s “*blessed one*”

- i) Appropriated in his baptism
- ii) This sets Jesus’ consciousness and vision
- iii) The temptations are against “blessedness”

- Turn these stones into bread – one does not live on bread alone
- All this glory will be yours if you worship me – one must worship God alone
- Throw yourself off the temple height and make God catch you – one does not test God

SESSION TWO

The Struggles inherent in our Blessedness

1) Our simplistic and romanticized notion of this

- i) The image of God as a beautiful icon inside us.
“Wow, I’m beautiful and have this wonderful dignity!”
- ii) *Our naivete about its power*
 - The divine madness as the real source of our discontent, addictions, narcissism, jealousy and dysfunctions.
 - Our simplistic and over-pious notions about “ego”
- iii) *Our naivete about its “friendliness”*
 - Energy isn’t friendly
 - An illustration: What’s wrong with pornography?

2) Divine energy inside – its struggles

- i) Our constant struggle with inflation and depression
- ii) Our struggle with grandiosity and narcissism (and their children)
 - *Grandiosity – always the “Christ-child” or the King
 - *Narcissism – excessive self-preoccupation
 - *Their children
 - entitlement and sexual entitlement
 - jealousy and sexual jealousy
 - rage
 - boredom
- iii) Our perpetual dis-ease, disquiet, and restlessness.
 - *“in the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable, we ultimately learn that here in this life all symphonies must remain unfinished.” (Karl Rahner)
 - *Struggling to be inside our own skins
- iv) Our struggle for faith, to believe in God.
 - *C.S. Lewis, The Great Divorce – the struggle of the artist and intellectual
- v) An illustration: The struggle of the “artist” and others highly in tune with their creativity
 - the struggle to remain “grounded” and not identify with the energy
 - the struggle for “faith”
 - the struggle with sexuality
 - the struggle with “entitlement”
 - the struggle with addictions
 - the struggle with pathological disquiet
 - with “normality”
 - with suicidal tendencies
- v) Our struggle with our various energies and their “imperialism”
 - King/Father – Queen/Mother
 - Warrior
 - Magus
 - Lover

SESSION THREE – Living Healthily Inside Divine Madness

Living with Divine Fire Inside us – Commandments for the Long Haul

- 1) Pray – make sure both that you are touching the energy but not identifying with it – *“Pray too inside the flames”*
- 2) Learn to keep your eyes turned upward-connecting ourselves to our source – *“Always against an infinite horizon”*
- 3) Keep grounded inside of family, community, and church – remaining inside “schools of charity” that keep us de-fantasized, grounded, and sane.
- 4) Put yourself under obedience so as to live beyond the ego with its myriad needs, wounds, indignations, and inflations – *Be the knight not the hero*
- 5) Become Post-sophistication – go back to the time before hardness of heart.
- 6) Put your fire at service of community – five rules for initiation
- 7) Let your energies fire you towards a different kind of glory
- 8) Search inside the fire for your true *“inner garment”*
- 9) Accept the tensions inside of you and then strive to properly balance them off:
 - *Lead without being elitist.*
 - *Be iconoclastic and pious at the same time.*
- 10) Let your energies fire you towards an ever deeper maturity.

Other DVD titles by Rev. Ronald Rolheiser:

Spirituality and the Two Halves of Life

Eucharist: God's Way of Embracing Us

The Cross of Christ

The Passion of Christ

Generative Discipleship-The Deeper Invitation of Jesus

On Blessings

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