

Staying Balanced in a Tilted World

By Fr. Demetrios Makoul

It is difficult to stay or feel connected to God due to our frenetic pace in which we often live our lives. We often rush from one activity to another without taking time to be still, mindful in the present, and process what we have been doing. This can often lead to us feeling out of control or like things in our life are spiralling out of control around us. There is a way however to maintain some level of peace, awareness, and calm even when living life with a hectic pace. It involves maintaining an inner stillness even when all around us seems chaotic. What keeps us grounded and what keeps us balanced throughout the day, even when everything around us seems tilted, is maintaining a constant awareness and connection with God throughout the day. Sounds great and obvious doesn't it? The following is a reminder of a practice and way of life we all need.

First we have to assess how often, if at all, we focus our mind on God throughout the day. That focus may be in the form of simply reflecting on God, assessing how we are doing spiritually that day (with regards to our thoughts and behaviour), or deliberate prayer even. This awareness of God and of our souls must become a constant undercurrent running beneath the activities of our daily life. In essence, our main daily activity is this awareness of God and monitoring our soul, while our daily earthly activities are the brief ventures out and away from this spiritual activity. For many, this involves a complete reversal to what they are accustomed to. Most of us get lost and immersed in our daily activities, only then making a brief venture out of our earthly duties to reflect on God or our soul.

Are we prepared to make this shift? Throughout our day, we must always return to that still, quiet spiritual desert within us. We must start our day there, we return to it throughout the day, and we then return there at the end of the day. God awaits us there and it is the place where we refresh our weary souls from our ventures out into the world. It is where we are replenished with God's peace. We need to remember the Prophet Elijah's encounter with God outside the cave on Mt. Horeb. God was not in the destructive wind, the earthquake, or the fire. The presence of the whispering breeze or still voice marked the presence of God (I Kings 19). We all need our own Mt. Horeb where we seek an encounter with God.

If we do this, if we make our awareness of God, of our souls, and withdrawal to our quiet place (to pray, reflect, process the day) the rule and not the exception, we will never feel out of control or like our lives are out of control. The mere connecting of our mind and heart to God has a rejuvenating power and brings peace. It grounds us, brings the chaotic nature of our life into focus, and simplifies our life by bringing us back to the basics. The still, gentle, and whispering breeze of God's presence is constant and always there, but we don't make the time to see it. Let us go forth and meet it.