

CELTIC CARMELITE WISDOM SPIRITUALITY-PART TWO

Since the Celtic people in Northwestern Europe were out of the reach of the Roman Empire and the Roman Church, they were not significantly influenced by these political and religious systems. This allowed the Celtic people to maintain their time-honored practices regarding the dignity of nature and community, and their artistic and creative imaginations as a way of understanding God and human beings.

When Christianity arrived among the Celtic peoples, they were able to find a synthesis of their ancient practices with the message of the Divine Presence.

The early Christian Celtic people were able to see the beautiful Presence of the Divine in their relationship with Nature. They stressed humility, the dignity of all things, and God's Presence in and through all of Creation. They maintained rich spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, communing with Nature, caring for those in need, hospitality, and poetic use of the imagination and art.

In all of the experiences of life, the Celtic people saw the Presence of the Holy Spirit. They were open to seeking an encounter with God in each aspect of their lives.

The Celtic people had a wonderful tradition of cultivating the concept of Anam Chara, or Soul Friends, who joined with them in the journey of their spiritual lives.

Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Spirituality offers an opportunity to re-acquaint ourselves with who we really are, as well as who we can become.

The heart of Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Spirituality is simply living life, following the Way (i.e., Jesus), which was the earliest description of the Christian journey. The early Christians were first described as followers of "The Way." Of course, this is a reference to Jesus' description of Himself in John 14:6 – "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

Following the Way refers to traveling the journey of life in the everyday ordinariness of life: the ups and downs which we all face. This is essentially the essence of spirituality.

CELTIC CARMELITE WISDOM SPIRITUALITY (CONT.)

Obviously, spirituality can take many forms. However, at its core, spirituality describes how we live out what we say we believe. It reflects our approach to life - what we think, what we do, how we feel. In other words, our spirituality might be similar to what might be called our worldview, or our paradigm.

Our spirituality is an accumulation of our personal history and of our life experiences. This accumulation typically leads to our worldview. Of course, not all of our life experiences are beneficial for us. Thus, we need to regularly examine our worldview to see if there is anything in that worldview which might interfere with our relationship with God and with our personal spiritual growth.

Our spirituality must not be seen as the “sacred” part of our lives, whereas “real life” takes place in all of the other parts of our lives, which are then considered “secular.” If we do this, we only look for God and listen to Him when we are in the sacred part of our lives. Essentially, God is then absent from the secular realm of our lives.

Our spirituality touches and influences every part of our lives, and every part of our lives touches and influences our spirituality. In other words, there is a reciprocal interaction between these two areas. Our spirituality might also be described as the essence of our relationship with God.

Our relationship with God is always a dynamic and growing one. It is a journey, what used to be called a pilgrimage. This journey involves being open to the transforming work of God in our lives.

In Romans 12:2 (NLT), St. Paul states: “Don’t copy the behaviors and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect His will really is.”

Worship involves all that we are and all that we do. All of our lives are a search for God. As St. Augustine stated: “There is a void within each of us which can only be filled by God Himself.”

CELTIC CARMELITE WISDOM SPIRITUALITY (CONT.)

In Psalm 42, we read these words: “As the deer pants for streams of water, so I long for You, O God. I thirst for God, for the living God.” (Psalm 42:1-2a; NLT).

In Psalm 63, we read these words: “O God, You are my God; I earnestly search for You. My soul thirsts for You; my whole body longs for You in this parched and weary land where there is no water.” (Psalm 63:1; NLT).

One of the significant discoveries along our life journey is that we don’t need to make the journey alone. We need significant people in our lives today. Further, we are connected to the “great cloud of witnesses,” which is referenced in Hebrews 12.

Magnus Magnussen stated: “Roman clergy said, ‘Do as I say,’ and expected to be obeyed, while the Celtic clergy said, ‘Do as I do,’ and hoped to be followed. That is why, in the Celtic tradition, everyone was encouraged to have an Anam Cara (a Soul Friend).”

Celtic Christians believed that, since everything was sacred, nothing was just secular. Since they saw God in everything, they encouraged a reverence for God’s creation and a respect for the care of His world.

Esther De Waal states: “The Celtic approach to God opens up a world in which nothing is too common to be exalted, and nothing is so sacred that it cannot be made common.” Celtic Christians believed that the Presence of God fills our daily life and transforms it.

Celtic Christians were committed to the love of God, to love of neighbor, and to love of one another. They were solidly Trinitarian in their view. This is evidenced in St. Patrick’s famous “Breastplate Prayer.”

At Christ the Pantocrator Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Mission and Monastic Community, our spirituality is described in this fashion:

EARLY CELTIC WISDOM SPIRITUALITY (CONT.)

We are an independent monastic community of the One, Holy, Orthodox Catholic, and Apostolic Church – weaving together threads of spirituality from the Anglican, Celtic Carmelite, Contemplative, Desert Fathers and Mothers, Eastern Orthodox, Iona Model, Mystical, Northumbrian Model, O.S.S.T. Model, Old Catholic, and Wisdom Traditions.

We are a ministry of Christian Counseling, Healing, Prayer, Soul Care, Spiritual Guidance, Wisdom Teaching, and Worship.

We believe that there are at least four important questions for us to ask ourselves on our spiritual journey:

“Who is it that you seek?” (John 18:4c)

“Who do you say that I am?” (Matthew 16:15)

“How then shall we live?” (Luke 10:25-28)

“How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” (Psalm 137:4)

If you have any questions about either Early Celtic Wisdom Spirituality or about the Celtic Carmelites at Christ the Pantocrator Celtic Carmelite Wisdom Mission and Monastic Community, please contact us at drfloydcovey@gmail.com.