The World Community for Christian Meditation

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Thursday of Lent Week 2

Most of us by now have probably got a slight or even strong sense of failure with our Lenten practices. We didn?t keep something up. Or we could have done better. An occasional examen of conscience can be quite useful in dispelling the negative feedback that leads to a downwards spiral. It can also help to break the self-consciousness that underlies the division between the real and the illusory.

The real is that we are never perfect and no amount of trying or posturing will convince us we are or can be.

If people put us on a pedestal, that is their problem. There is a high turnover rate these days for idols and heroes anyway ? watch the Oscars. Our responsibility is to be humble ? which means to keep our bare feet in the*humus* of mother earth.

Perfectionism however creeps in, even into our very limited humility. So we have to keep the virus check on ? guarding the heart as the desert fathers called it ? and catch it at its first appearance.

I didn?t keep my promise, my good intentions collapsed, my meditation is one continuous distraction. There are many voices and innuendoes that allow the virus to get a hold again.

Yet every sense of failure can be turned around and turned to advantage. Catching and disposing of it immediately deepens our self-knowledge, self-acceptance and self-control. This reality check soon brings with a sense of freedom and deep happiness ? the kind that comes from the pure source, not the kind that we confect.

Each time the feeling of failure takes hold, examine if to see if it is accurate and then ? whether it is accurate or not or even if you aren?t sure ? lay it aside. To live in the freedom and purity of the desert means to lay aside such thoughts.

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