

## **READINGS AND REFLECTIONS – AC RETREAT at the Kentucky Holy Land (Bardstown) – 6/3-5/26**

“I only knew of [God’s] presence by the movement of my heart.”

—St Bernard (in *Listening with the Heart*—Carlos Gutierrez)

Contemporary spirituality of the heart sees the heart as both corporeal and spiritual, a symbol of the *whole* person. (New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality, edited by a friend of Gethsemani, M. Downey).

**Listening with the heart**—and “listening **to the heart**”—takes **Silence**, at times inner, other times outer: The outer silence of Jesus before his accusers; His inner silence when he needed to speak. **Silence** is pliable: It can be a needed asset. Or it can be the wrong thing to do, when someone needs our voice to **speak up from the heart** and we don’t, instead playing it safe.

**Listening with the Heart** helps us silence the ego and speak the truth from the heart, without fear of disagreements. Cardinal Radcliffe illustrates this practice and how to rest in the midst of polarization.

A man comes to his rabbi to complain about his wife. At the end of the conversation, the rabbi tells him, “My friend, you’re absolutely right, you are justified!” That afternoon, the wife of the man comes to the rabbi and complained about her husband at great length. At the end of the conversation, the rabbi says to the woman, “My friend, you are absolutely right; you are justified!” When the woman was gone, the rabbi’s wife says to him, “But you’re absolutely mistaken. You cannot say that both are justified.” And the rabbi said to his wife, “You are right!”

Monastic spirituality is a **spirituality of the heart**. To find God, we must find our heart and be in touch with it.

To find the **heart** is a matter of allowing God’s Word to penetrate it and cause it to leap within, like John the Baptist.

The **heart** is slippery and hard to grasp. It is found not by introspective analysis, but by progressively learning to recognize the personal content in our life.

There are precious moments in which **the heart** manifests its distinctive character, and these occur when it is confronted by something similar to itself. The heart is called forth only by what is like itself.

—Michael Casey, OCSO’s *Undivided Heart*