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Focus For Review of Life

by Canice Connors

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In preparing my review of life, there should be a focus, or a special attentiveness or way of looking at my life.

Behold the SANDPIPER! Observe the behavior of this bird. It is always looking down at the ocean, the source of its food, and therefore the source of life. It is constantly looking, prodding in the sand or water, so that it can eat. If one day it said: "I am tired of looking down in this attentive way. I won't do it anymore," It would die. The Scriptures tell us to always be attentive, to constantly feed on the word.

Preliminary thoughts:

Am I a free person in knowing my own heart? Do I listen to my behavior? My wishfulness, my wishes are fantasy! My behavior is where I am at. I must learn to discern the difference. It is in discerning my behavior that I have grounds for hope. If I live in a wish world, I am not in touch with reality which can only be found in my behavior.

SIX PATTERNS OF BEING ATTENTIVE:

This is a suggested discipline. It is a way of organizing my personal story telling as I prepare my review of life and as I share my review of life with my fraternity brothers.

1. My biological pattern.

We are flesh. - - am I obedient to the Lord in how I sleep? The best test of wellness is how I sleep. - - nutrition: how and what do I eat? The best test of how I feel in the morning is what I ate the day before. - - sexuality: an impulse that is fervent. Life wants to continue. I must know its rhythm. Some use masturbation as a palliative to fall asleep. Be attentive to what precedes and what follows masturbation.

2. My esthetic pattern.

My living conditions: what does my room look like? Do I listen to good music, see good art, speak the language correctly?

3. My mystical pattern.

What is the immediate presence of God to Me? How do I discern spirits?



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4. My work pattern.

Do I prioritize? Waste time reading third class mail? Is my life controlled by the phone and the door? Am I ipriestfi all the time? If so, there is the possibility I am not ministering at all. Work without supervision is dangerous. My work needs checking and evaluation. We priests are in such stress, and often in an identity fog, that we need to talk and check it all out.

5. My dramatic pattern.

How do I have my life make an impact, a difference? How do I avoid being ge- neric? If I feel anonymous, I will act anonymously.

6. My intellectual pattern.

What do I read, study? Am I energized by knowledge of some topic?

BE A SANDPIPER!