

Having A Spiritual Life

Having a Spiritual Life by Ngọc Le For many years, being spiritual for me meant that I went to church every Sunday, that I prayed once in a while, and that I sometimes went to confession. A spiritual life is what I have on Sundays and during special church celebrations such as Christmas and Easter. But as I grow up, I realize that there is much more to being spiritual than the things above. Spirituality isn't something that we can point out and easily grasp. Rather, it is more like the invisible air that covers the entire earth or the blood that unceasingly courses through our veins. It also permeates every fiber of our being. As vague as this may sound, I believe that it is not so entirely impossible to understand. What does it mean to be spiritual? I think that being spiritual is being deliberate in every aspect of our life in trying to orient all of our actions and thoughts to God. Let us take the example of eating. Most of us probably don't feel that eating is a spiritual thing. After all, what's spiritual about chewing food, swallowing it, and then having it digested in our body? While all this sounds dry, eating is actually one of the most spiritual aspects of our life. Remember that the Eucharistic celebration which we experience during mass is essentially a meal in which we gather and share in the body and blood of Christ. Eating is a spiritual activity when the food reminds us how blessed we are to have things to eat while millions of people go to bed hungry each night. It is spiritual if we realize how much work it took and how many hands were involved in bringing about the meal that we see before us, so that we give thanks to God for his goodness. Eating is no doubt an important part of our spiritual life. But another aspect equally important is working. Work at first also does not seem to be very spiritual. In fact, it can be arduous and trying. But work is extremely spiritual because when we work, we participate in the act of creating and recreating the world. If we realize this, we will be conscientious of how our work affects the world and our lives. Work is spiritual because it is a privilege that God has given us. Through our work, we experience the gifts that God has bestowed upon us. As we can see, spirituality is something that involves every aspect of our life. Even the simple act of walking is a spiritual thing because walking about helps us to see things around us and the goodness of God's creations. Walking helps us to realize that all of us have a starting point and a destination. As we reflect on this, we see that as human beings, our final destination is God. To use the words of St. Augustine, our hearts can never rest in peace until they rest in God. If walking is spiritual, then so is everything else—studying, playing a ball game, admiring a beautiful sunset. In fact, everything about our life is spiritual because everything can be oriented towards God. The human being is extremely spiritual. We are not just bones and flesh. Unfortunately, so many of us fail to realize this. And so many more so sadly restrict spirituality to Sunday mass and occasional prayers. I truly hope that through this short article, we can expand our notion of spirituality in order to see how all encompassing it is in our lives.

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