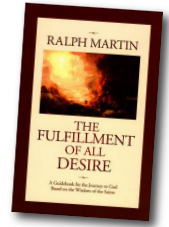


LENT
2020

The Fulfillment of All Desire

Chapter 15



QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING & REFLECTION

Deep Union (pp. 373 – 384)

1. What are the different ways the moment of spiritual betrothal can be experienced?
2. Describe the imperfections in the intellect and will that St. John says can still remain in a soul “betrothed” to the Lord.
3. How did those imperfections manifest themselves in the life of St. Therese of Lisieux?
4. According to St. Bernard, what can happen at the moment of death that frees the soul from spiritual imperfections and enables it to enter into a spiritual marriage?
5. What is the difference between a spiritual betrothal and a spiritual marriage?

6. How, according to Pope Benedict XVI, is the Blessed Virgin Mary the perfect model of a soul in the state of spiritual marriage?

7. What metaphors for St. John and St. Bernard use to describe spiritual marriage?

8. What, according, to St. Bernard, does a soul contemplating Christ's face in Heaven desire? What does such a soul lack? How does this contemplation differ from contemplation on earth?

9. Why, according to most saints and doctors, can souls in the unitive state still lose their salvation?

10. What does St. Bernard advise such souls to do in order to prevent themselves from turning away from Christ?

11. How does the varied pace of different saints to union with God help you understand the progression of your own spiritual journey?

12. What does St. Therese's struggle with imperfections and attachments, even during the time of spiritual betrothal, tell you about the primacy of grace in the soul's movement towards God?

13. Look back at your answer to question number ten above. How is St. Bernard's advice helpful even for souls who have not yet entered the unitive stage?