

# **SPIRITUALITY IS VALUE BASED INTEGRATED DAILY LIVING**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The church in India is entering into a new period in her life and history. The Christians in India are facing a challenging turbulent time. The many events in the country involving the Church indicate this. Our image as a community of disciples sent out to preach is confronted. The way we live, we profess our faith, our evangelization, our organization of works, the institutionalized model that we have presented so far in our mission is being questioned. We need to evaluate our presence – our own identity to-day.

In our country to-day many incidents make us feel helpless and hopeless. Modernization and globalization have entered in the life of man. There is utter disregard for human dignity. In the religious level there is militant fundamentalism of different brands. Globalization has led us to foreign debt, monopolization of natural resources by a few, neglecting the poor of livelihood, job and sustenance. Globalization has been presented as a TINA (there is no alternative). Poor are further marginalized. Together with globalization, there is perpetuation of liberalization and privatization. Hindu fundamentalism looks at specially Christians and Muslims as rivals and enters into a mono-cultural nationalism claiming India to be only a land for Hindus. They concentrate on Issues of “culture” “nation” “conversion”. Our work among the down trodden in our country is seen as a threat to the interests of the upper castes.

God so loved the world that he sent His only begotten son. His starting point was love of the world. He expresses His love by sending His son. That son is Jesus of Nazareth, the word incarnate. The church's mission is the mission of the Father who gathered a community together by His word and animated by His sprit to continue the mission and carry it out in all the nations among all the peoples of the world by preaching, serving and witnessing the vision of the reign of God. The church is the sign and sacrament of the reign of God to historize the kingdom and heavenize the earth so that all human beings and the whole cosmos move towards a new heaven and new earth of justice, peace, equality, fraternity and freedom. This preaching of God's Kingdom and establishing His kingdom shall be the interest of every individual Christian.

### **1) ATTITUDES**

The Individual Christian professes the perspective be visualizes. The attitudes he lives with will affect the whole process of his living – giving life to others and witnessing here and now. That is the spirituality of daily living. We are not invited to-day to die as martyrs, to shed blood for Christ but we can live as martyrs-living our day to day life in joy and enthusiasm, in service and compassion and thus proclaiming the good news. That would influence the family – inspire the neighbourhood and bear witness to the values of Christ. Let us take some examples of daily living:

a) Antony wakes rather early in the morning – spends time in prayer – participates, in the Eucharist – works hard – makes his family joyful – has a kuid word to everyone around – whether he is a Christian, Hindu or Muslim.

b) Barnabas – he too attends many devotions – takes part in prayer meetings – but is annoyed at home – is never optimistic.

c) Rani as a housewife does the family chores with joy – makes no distinction of people who live in the neighbourhood – is compassionate towards the poor.

d) Patricia – lives in a rich family – never mingles with others – never relates – is rather individualistic.

e) Peter involves in the church activities – reaches out to the slum areas – gets others too to help the poor – is altruistic in attitude, has many friends among the Hindu brethren.

Thus we come across in life, different personalities with varied experience, intellectual capacity, expressions of love and compassion. These expressions of life and love ultimately depend upon their attitudes.

There are persons who possess the attitudes of being alert – active – sportive – balanced – calm – self possessed – pleasant – serene – cheerful – optimistic – joyful – enthusiastic – available – helpful – generous – polite – delicate – noble – magnanimous – sincere – simple – humble – open – spontaneous – graceful – grateful – disciplined – neat – orderly – methodic – hard working – self – sacrificing – reliable – responsible – respectful – recollected – prayerful. Such persons always appeal to us.

On the other hand there are others who are immature, impolite – ill-mannered – gloomy – moody – morose – sad – touchy – resentful – apathetic – indifferent – disorderly – introvert – self conscious – selfish – calculative – light headed – superficial – worldly – comfort loving – proud – jealous – self righteous. These never appeal to us. We only avoid such characters.

So our life in general is expressed in our attitudes. Our attitudes proceed either from our needs or values. Values are ideals in life a man proposes to live. eg. prayer, simplicity, service, hard work.

Needs are pre-dispositions to action that inhere in the very nature of man in his organic – emotional – spiritual dimension, eg. food, security, affection.

**ATTITUDES** are tendencies towards action but more specific as described above and numerous than values. They function like fulcrum.

The spirituality we visualize should produce in us value based attitudes that would lead to an integration of life and love (daily living) – that would influence and inspire others.

Napoleon used to say, "We men of power merely re-arrange the world, but it is only people of the sprit who really change the world."

## 2) SPIRITUALITY

The word spirituality comes from Latin word "SPIRITUALITAS" meaning the state or nature of being spiritual. Being spiritual is being related to the human spirit or soul or God who is spirit incarnate.

Spirituality can be explained as the nature of the spirit or soul or spirit of God or nature of God.

Spirituality can also express the state of being perfect as God is perfect or being holy as God is holy as in Mt. 5:48. "Be perfect as the Heavenly Father is perfect" Lev. 11:14. "Be holy as I am holy".

Spirituality can also refer to the attitude of mind one has towards the ethical or moral codes or standards or values or norms observed in the society for the sake of the common good.

If we carefully go through all the descriptions of spirituality we will find that spirituality can be applied to any person who believes.

- in the existence of Human spirit or soul
- in the existence of God or Holy sprit and
- in the Ethical or moral values.

A. Jordan Aumann. o.p. says "In its widest sense spirituality refers to any religious or ethical value that is concretized as an attitude or spirit from which actions flow".

This concept of spirituality is not restricted to any particular religion. It applies to any person who has a belief in the divine or transcendental and fashions a life-style according to one's religious convictions. In this sense we can speak of Zen, Busshist, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu as well as Christian spirituality.

"Spirituality is a general science that cuts across all the rest and bridges all the subjects relevant to Theology. Flowing from the Revelation of God in Christ, it brings all such subjects into the life of the Individual" says Joseph SUDBRACK (Sacramentum Mundi. Vol.6).

### 3) CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

In Pauline theology pneuma – is opposed to SARX (flesh) and spirit (pneuma) is set over against either flesh (Gal 3:3, 5:13, 16:25, 1Cor 3:1-3 Rom 7:14-8:14) or animal (1Cor 2:14-15).

Later for Paul, pneumatic or spiritual person is one whose being and life are ordered, led, influenced or inspired by the spirit of God, writes W.H. PRINCIPE (New dictionary of catholic spirituality, London.210)

From all these we can define Christian spirituality as a life led or influenced or guided or moved or inspired by the spirit of Christ.

Value based attitudes led by the spirit in the Christian atmosphere can have variety of spiritualities.

a) It could be Trinitarian: Three persons – one God – unity in diversity – fatherhood – son ship – spirit.

b) It can be based on the gifts of the Holy spirit – joy – peace – love....

c) The kernel of Christian spirituality is Christ. One's spirituality will depend on the knowledge of Jesus one enjoys and the love one has for Jesus.

d) Goal of Christian spirituality is union with Christ. All need not be in the same degree. Every person is unique and so his union with christ is also unique.

e) What takes us to Jesus is the Gospel – The understanding of gospel can differ from person to person, from group to group. eg. Jesus appears in the gospels as preacher, healer, shepherd, servant.

f) New forms of spirituality also emerged as charismatic people like Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross – Ignatius of Loyola catered to the spiritual requirements of their times.

g) Varied spiritualities also developed due to social, cultural, economic or political situation in which individuals or groups lived, eg. 12<sup>th</sup> century Italy was amassing wealth. St. Francis preached spirituality of poverty.

19<sup>th</sup> century Europe was in confusion due to Industrial Revolution. young people were unemployed – orphaned. St. John Bosco came up with youth spirituality.

#### **4) INTEGRATION FOR DAILY LIVING**

While we approve the value based spirituality and Christ oriented attitudes in our dealings, to-day to appeal to the modern generation – at the turbulent time – in the challenging period in India and to be accepted by all – Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs.... we propose some characteristics that may appear as new trends but that will certainly help us to integrate spirituality into our daily living.

##### **4.1. From object to subject**

35 yrs ago spirituality was objective centred filled with laws – prayers – mortifications – virtues – devotions etc. A day of a seminarian was filled with devotional practices – It demanded discipline – obedience – sacrifice. It offered clear expectations and structures. To-day there's new emphasis on human person as a free and developing subject in spiritual life. Subject centred spirituality is measured in terms of inner growth – growth in trust – love – openness – freedom – service.

Religious experience rather than religious practices is given importance. Focus is people's personal relationship with God and God's call to individuals. In our fidelity, instead of simple obedience we speak of dialogue and discernment. Prayer becomes a prayer of the heart.

Role of spiritual direction has less of teaching and more of facilitating directee's relationship with God. Director listens. We speak to-day of directed retreats. Revelation is taken as God's self communication. Our relationship with God is not in rituals but in experiences.

Contemporary spirituality looks at the world as a product of God's love and locus of God's presence. *Gaudium et spes* invites us to involve in the woes and hopes of this world. God found every thing as good. We should rejoice in the world as a gift of God. We should express our concern for the earth and promote stewardship to things and resources under our care. World is a place to encounter God. We work out our salvation by getting involved and working for peace and justice. We should become mystics in the market place, contemplatives in action – active contemplatives

### CONCLUSION

Our spirituality should help us to form value based attitudes which would be a balance between the subject and object, perfection and process, privacy and community and the other world and this world.

Richard Mc Brian would say "Catholicism is not a matter of *either or* but of *both and*. It is not rejecting one and holding on to another but a blending of both – integration of old and new, i.e. new understanding of God, world, revelation, grace, etc.

CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY is a lived experience shaped by life, love, culture and theology. It is an incarnational spirituality that finds mystery and sacredness in the world. It is a wholistic spirituality which includes soul – body, virtue – sin etc. It is a prophetic spirituality which is mystical and political. It is an ecclesial spirituality inclusive of authority and discernment.

CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY thus is a blending - an integration of varieties of gifts – varieties of graces - varieties of experiences leading to the same Lord who is the Father of us all and who is in all. It is a spirituality that involves, influences, interacts and finally instills value based attitudes in men and women. Such a way of thinking and acting, daily living can be a great help to day in this challenging period and turbulent time. Thus spirituality is a value based integrated daily living.