

Learning to See as God Sees

By Christina Semmens

It's summer, and the "Summer Reading Lists" are making their rounds. For me, I am always excited to see what is on the various reading lists, because I am a reader. A voracious one, in fact. I know this may seem a bit archaic in our movie, TV, and YouTube video dominated world, but I have never found anything more deeply satisfying than a good book.

Now the words of a *great* book linger with me for days, and in the process of reflection, I find that my mind, heart and soul are all transformed by the author's words that I soon find myself seeing with a different perspective, one that has been influenced and changed by my reading. *This* is the essence of why I love to read—because it is the easiest means by which to become a well-rounded and knowledgeable person.

One Voice articles recently have been encouraging us to reflect upon one of the habits of missionary discipleship—daily prayer and meditation. Why daily prayer? Because it is only from a bedrock of prayer that we can strive to gain the proper perspective; to learn how to "see as God's sees." Why is this important? So we can choose more easily to anchor ourselves in the things that truly matter in life, rather than be occupied with things that *seem* important. But how to begin, or try to get better at "seeing how God sees"? Through the practice of spiritual reading.

"Spiritual reading is that reading whose purpose is to assist the believer to better know, love, and serve God and thereby become more God-like, ...especially in his life of prayer and the practice of Christian virtue," writes Servant of God Fr John Hardon, SJ.

But what to read? In a world where information is doubling every 48 hours, the choices overwhelm, particularly when trying to choose a diet of good and nourishing spiritual food for the mind. To this end, Fr Hardon listed, and prioritized, five types of spiritual reading for our consideration: 1) the Bible; 2) teachings of the Church; 3) history of the Church; 4) biographies or the thoughts of saintly persons, either by the saints themselves or by someone else; and 5) any kind of reflection on any of the preceding categories that are academic, personal, or practical, or any combination of these.

But why these types of reading? Fr Hardon tells us simply, “If I wish to become holy I must read about holy people. Their faith will strengthen mine. Their trust in divine providence will encourage mine. Above all their victory over self, the world and the evil spirit will spur me on to victory. How we need this encouragement! Only saints reproduce saints!”

Daily prayer that is nourished with spiritual reading tends to make conversation with our Lord grow in wisdom and clarity, and being an even greater source of strength and encouragement in the midst of one’s daily life. And that, in a nutshell, is how we learn, with the Holy Spirit, to eventually “see as God sees.”

So, my invitation to you this summer is that instead of simply reading a book to pass away a day at the beach, choose to read about God and His saints, so that your prayer life bears fruit not just this summer, but for many seasons to come.

This, and other articles focused on missionary discipleship, and about the upcoming 2019 Diocesan Eucharistic Congress can be found at www.BHMCatholic.com