



Spirings of Hope Virtual Retreat

Infertility and Intimacy with Christ: An Invitation to Hope

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- Affirming the validity of each person's experience of infertility is essential to an authentic understanding of intimacy with Christ
 - Everyone has different histories (temperaments, family relationships, losses, joys, spiritual preparation, etc.), and all of those inform his/her experience of infertility
 - Which means that resources (pastoral and otherwise) that fail to take the particularity of each person's experience of infertility into account are inadequate at best and actively harmful at worst
 - These unhelpful resources implicitly or explicitly approach the suffering of infertility in one of two ways
 - Bootstrapping: "Toughen up, buttercup, and stuff those uncomfortable feelings down; they have no place in prayer, and suffering will make you holy!"
 - Pollyanna: "Rejoice! The One you're really longing for is Christ, so you need to completely subsume your longing for children into that longing for Heaven, and it's completely okay that you're suffering now because that's exactly what God wants for you!"

- The universal call to holiness is a call to union with Christ - a union made possible only in and through intimacy with Christ
 - Intimacy here is understood as a lived relationship with Him grounded in prayer, in the embrace of the Church, and in the grace of the Sacraments
 - This intimacy requires our particularities without exclusion - all of them, including and especially our unique experience of infertility - because it is a relationship between persons
 - We are NEVER asked to divorce ourselves from our suffering, feelings, longings, etc. in order to be intimate with Christ
 - In fact, they become the ground of hope precisely in relationship with Him

Reflection Questions:

- What parts of your history most inform your experience of infertility, and what parts of your spouse's history affect his/hers?
- What has your experience of prayer and intimacy with Christ been, and how has your experience of infertility affected it?
- What kinds of resources have you found most and least supportive in your experience of infertility?