

RETURN TO THE FATHER'S HOUSE

Fr. David J. Simonetti

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

The following reflection questions are used in Return to the Father's House, a DVD Retreat-on-Disc. Each question is based on specific points in Fr. Simonetti's talks, and can be used in group discussion or personal reflection either before, or after viewing each video.

Scene One: Retreat Introduction

What is my view of God?

How has my own personal & cultural history affected my view and relationship to God the Father? Am I afraid of Him? If so, why?

Do I believe that He knows me personally and that He will care for me?

Do I realize that God has made me unique? Do I believe that He loves me for who I am and has a specific plan for my life and eternity?

Scene Two: Joined to Christ in Love

Am I striving to live a life of on-going conversion? Or, am I afraid to enter more deeply into the spiritual life, being content to stay at the surface and in mediocrity? If so, why?

Do I think that I have already "arrived" at my desired place in the spiritual life? Does God have other plans for me?

Do I believe that I can only be healed by the grace of God, or do I rely on my own strength? How successful have my own efforts been?

Do I trust in the Lord's Divine Mercy in my life? Have I allowed Jesus to be my most intimate friend and Savior?

Scene Three: The Illusion of Leaving Home

In what ways am I similar to the prodigal son?

What “distant lands” have lured me away from home? Do I seek self-glorification, power, fleshly pleasure, or unhealthy relationships to bring me lasting happiness? What did I find there? How long did the momentary happiness last?

Am I a distant observer in the spiritual life, indifferent and even hostile to the life of grace? Or am I an active participant in receiving and giving mercy in the “loop of grace?”

Do I feel as if I am not completely forgiven by God or that He is still holding the past against me? Or, is it truly I who will not let go of my sins and accept the Father’s full forgiveness and Mercy? Am I so proud to think my sins are greater than His Divine Mercy?

Do I view God as a “competitor” to my “freedom”? Is God demanding too much of me, or am I using that as an excuse to avoid changing my bad habits and sinful ways?

What have been my “turning points”? When was the humbling moment when I finally realized that I needed to “return home to the Father’s love?”

Scene Four: Returning to Our Father’s Embrace

Am I jealous of other’s blessings? Can I see that when the Father says, “all that I have is yours” it is really meant for me too?

Can I see and name all of my blessings from God? Is God’s will more important than mine? Do I realize that His Will for my life is designed to bring me the greatest possible amount of joy and peace in this life and in the life to come?

Am I grateful for even the struggles in my life, since they lead me to rely on God instead of myself? Do I realize that my trials draw the Father’s love and compassion upon me in blessing?

Am I harboring any unforgiveness in my heart? Does envy, anger, or greed keep me from being merciful to others?

Am I resentful of those “less dutiful” than me in carrying out tasks? Do I think I am better than others or superior to them, and therefore more deserving of God’s grace?

Do I refuse to share in the Father's joy when others repent? Am I upset when they receive a blessing I feel they do not deserve? Do I doubt their sincerity, and even secretly hope that they be "punished" for their misdeeds?

Do I believe that the Father "runs out" to embrace me as well? Do I believe that I am worth looking for?

Do I sometimes find myself constantly worrying and in distress? Do I trust in God's Providence to provide "my daily bread"?

Do I pray to God? When I do pray, is it "from the heart" or are my prayers said in a hurried fashion. Am I as concerned that I thank the Father for all of His blessings poured out upon me, as I am that He hears my prayers of petition when I am in need?

Am I ready to let myself be fully loved and forgiven by the Father? Do I trust that the Father wants me home and is looking for me?