

DOMINICAN CENTER at MARYWOOD
SPIRITUAL DIRECTION PRACTICUM
YEAR 1, MODULE 1,
NOVEMBER, SESSION 2

Key Elements of Personal Transformation

- Transformation is a process to be lived into.
- Transformation occurs in the “School of Experience”; life does it to me.
- Transformation takes place within me not only intellectually but, more importantly, affectively. I “re-member” myself and hold my memories, dreams symbols “by my heart’s hand.”
- Transformation requires self-knowledge, the confrontation of myself in my sinfulness which leads to true repentance (the “knowing” of myself) and to the knowledge of God, especially the God of Mercy and the God who knows and loves me personally.
- Transformation consists in my becoming incarnate, in entering more deeply and fully into my own humanity, in owning my anger, my sexuality, all those parts of myself that I may find difficult to claim, to acknowledge. Transformation means allowing myself to relate as a vulnerable human being.
- Transformation takes place through the reconciling of opposites, of those parts of myself that I split off from myself. I hold them both until I find the place within where they are united.
- The process of transformation calls me to find the meaning that is within me, the call to LIFE in its fullness. Central to the spiritual journey is the reality that the Reign of God is within me. I know this reality as God leads me to deeper and deeper interiority.
- Transformation involves the mystery of suffering. I need to allow suffering to yeast me. Suffering has redemptive power.

Attitudes to hold about the process of Conversion

- Transformation happens by my being pregnant with whatever IS.
- It is important to take my interior seriously, to learn to relate to it as a friend.
- Repentance is accepting myself for who/what I am-not beating myself for making a mistake.
- There is no place I have been or where I am led that God is not present, AND God often appears when I least expect God.
- Transformation is not so much willed by myself as wrought in my depths.
- Living in contemplative awareness enables me to lead a discerning life.
- I do not convert myself; God does it within me, and, sometimes, in spite of me.

“Do you know what it means to be struck by grace?...We cannot transform our lives, unless we allow them to be transformed by the stroke of grace. It happens or it does not happen. And certainly it does not happen if we try to force it upon ourselves, just as it shall not happen so long as we think, in our self-complacency, that we have no need of it. Grace strikes us when we are in great pain and restlessness. It strikes us when, year after year, the longed-for perfection of life does not appear, when the old compulsions reign within us as they have for decades, when despair destroys all joy and courage. Sometimes at that moment a shaft breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying; ‘You are accepted. You are accepted, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know. Do not try to do anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything. Simply accept the fact that you are accepted. If that happens to us, we experience grace.” Paul Tillich, “You Are Accepted,” *The Shaking of the Foundations*. New York: Scribner’s, 1948, chap. 19.