

## Prince of Peace Mission

### St. John of the Cross ... the ladder of Love

#### First Rung ... Moment of Fervor

- Moment of closeness
- Our hearts are stirred ... our spirit is uplifted
- Proud Father in the elevator ...
- A sick woman who learns she will be a grandmother ...
  
- **What is God doing?** ... Lifting us out of ourselves ...
- Without this moment, we would think that Love is what we do ...
- Love is so much more ...
- It is a mystery in which we live and move and have our being ...
- "Love consists in this ...not that we have loved God but that God has loved us" (Jn. 4: 10-12)
  
- **Advice** ... Enjoy
- Be Grateful ... acknowledge our blessings ...
- A grateful heart is a loving heart

#### Second Rung ... Moment of Care and Good Works

- Moment of Generosity
- Love moves us to do something we would not do on our own
- Family decides to take in an ailing mother/mother in law/ grandmother
- Some sacrifice ... suffering ... many blessings ....
  
- **What is God doing?** ... Redeeming the world ... making life better
- **Advice** ... Reach out ... take the risk

#### Third Rung ... Moment of Flatness

- Vulnerable Moment ... Loss of Enthusiasm
- Acedia ... lack of care
- An ancient spiritual condition ... leaves us listless ...
- It may just be a rut ... change your routines ...
- On the other hand ... it may be a purification ...
  
- Early love ... romantic love ... is easy ... it is so satisfying ... focus on what I get
- Later love ... committed love ... is deeper ... more focused on the good beyond myself
- After twenty years of marriage ... not much there ... life seems gone ... nothing left ...
- Ten years later ... renew our vows ... you told us to hang in ... just a moment ...
- I began to notice all the things he did as a father ... as a husband ... I could see his goodness

- **What is God up to?**
- Leading us to the good beyond ourselves...
- **Advice** ... Hang in there ... stay with your routines ...

#### **Fourth Rung ... Moment of Suffering**

- Some suffering is a consequence of our choice
- Some suffering comes out of nowhere ... sickness ... loss of job ... death
- "Joey is dead!" What do you say???
- **Where is God** in the middle of our suffering ...
- Not as cause ... God does not send suffering as a punishment ... This is not the revelation of Jesus
- God is there with us ...
- The Cross is a sign of his love ...
- God so loved the world that he sent his only Son ... the Son so loved us he gave his life for us ...
- **Advice** ... stay close to one another ... know you are not alone ...

#### **Fifth Rung ... Moment of Longing**

- Begins with a backward glance ... longing for something that used to be
- "I miss my husband terribly ... I have been waiting to get over his death"
- When we pray into our longing ... slowly our attention can shift
- "At least I have my children and grandchildren"
- **What is God up to?** What does Love reveal in this moment?
- This is the sanctifying moment ... when we learn that it is all gift ...
- When we truly know it is all gift ... we are free to give it away ...
- **Advice** ... Stay open ... receive the gifts that are right now ...

#### **Sixth Rung ... Moment of Darkness**

- Moment of aloneness ...
- It all goes dark ...
- Collapsed lung ...
- Like falling into a dark open pit ...
- "God Help Me..."
- **Where is God?** Love surfaces our deepest hope ... even in a cry of pain ...
- **Advice** ... Decide to Trust ... in your deepest hope ...
- Some decide never to trust ... the road to despair ...

## Seventh Rung ... Moment of Union

- Moment of communion ... when two have become one
- Sometimes they begin to look like each other ... walk like each other
- We become like the one that we love ... and who loves us
  
- **What is God up to?**
- Making us Holy?
- Holiness has more to do with God than with ourselves ...
- When we have spent time with God ... when we receive his love ... we become like him ...
- **Advice** ... Stay close to the Fire of his love
- It will transform you