

9. DAILY SPIRITUAL INJECTIONS



Again, in everything one must be looking upward, and not downward, at the kingdom of heaven and not down at the details of earthly life. That is, the details of earthly life must be second, and this looking upward must be with zeal, determination and constancy. Constancy is something which is worked out by a spiritual regime based upon wisdom handed down from the Holy Fathers—not mere obedience to tradition for tradition's sake, but rather a conscious assimilation of what wise men in God have seen and written down. On the outward side, this constancy is worked out by a little prayer, and we have this basic little prayer in the church services which have come down to us. Of course in different places they are performed according to one's strength, more or less. [Next...](#) Constancy involves also a regular reading of spiritual texts, for example at mealtime, because we must be constantly injected with other-worldliness. This means constantly nourishing ourselves with these texts, whether in services or in reading, in order to fight against the other side, against the worldliness that constantly gnaws at us. If for just one day we stop these other-worldly "injections," it is obvious that worldliness starts taking over. When we go without them for one day, worldliness invades—two days, much more. We find that soon we think more and more in a worldly way, the more we allow ourselves to be exposed to that way of thinking and the less we expose ourselves to other-worldly thinking.

These injections—daily injections of heavenly food—are the outward side, and the inward side is what is called spiritual life. Spiritual life does not mean being in the clouds and saying the Jesus Prayer or going through various motions. It means discovering the laws of this spiritual life as they apply to one in one's own position, one's situation. This comes over the years by attentive reading of the Holy Fathers with a notebook, writing down those passages which seem most significant to us, studying them, finding how they apply to us, and, if need be, revising earlier views of them as we get a little deeper into them, finding what one Father says about something, what a second Father says about the same thing, and so on. There is no encyclopedia that will give you that. You cannot decide you want to find all about some one subject and begin reading the Holy Fathers. There are a few indexes in the writings of the Fathers, but you cannot simply go at spiritual life that way. You have to go at it a little bit at a time, taking the teaching in as you are able to absorb it, going back over the same texts in later years, reabsorbing them, getting more, and gradually getting to find out how these spiritual laws apply to you. As a person does that, he discovers that every time he reads the same Holy Father he finds new things. He always goes deeper into it.