



The Sacrament Of The Present Moment



Centering Prayer



The Sacrament of the Present Moment


Speaker: William J. Dohar, Ph.D.

The Jesuit mystic, Jean-Pierre de Caussade wrote that the sacrament of the present moment is "full of infinite treasures. It contains far more than you have the capacity to hold." What happens when we wake up to this present moment? How can it be sacramental? How does God become manifest? And what of us--do we linger and 'wait for the grace' or check our watches and flee the moment? This workshop is devoted to the practice of the present moment and perhaps finding a glimpse of those treasures God is offering us. Through spiritual exercises, short presentations and group discussion, we'll learn from each other and from the Spirit dwelling among us when we gather to pray.


Saturday,
February 11, 2023
10 AM —12:30 PM
Ellard Hall
(In-person event)

E-mail: centering@mhr.org
to register (name @ e-mail
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William "Bill" J. Dohar, Ph.D., is a Bay Area teacher, writer, speaker and spiritual director. He's a Senior Lecturer in Santa Clara University's Religious Studies Department and the Graduate Program in Pastoral Ministries. He has degrees in theology and history as well as a Licentiate in Medieval Studies from the Pontifical Institute in Toronto where he also received his PhD. He has written books and numerous articles on the history of medieval piety and devotion, the priesthood, parish life, and pastoral care.

The sacrament of the present moment is a concept rooted in spirituality that emphasizes the importance of living fully in the present and recognizing each moment as an opportunity for divine connection. This idea, often associated with the teachings of various religious and philosophical traditions, invites individuals to appreciate the here and now as sacred. By embracing the present moment, one can cultivate a deeper awareness of life and enhance their spiritual journey. This article delves into the essence of the sacrament of the present moment, its historical background, practical applications, and its transformative potential in our daily lives.

Historical Background

Understanding the sacrament of the present moment requires exploring its historical and theological roots. This concept can be traced back to several influential thinkers and spiritual leaders.

1. Theological Foundations

- Christian Mysticism: Many Christian mystics, such as Meister Eckhart and St. Teresa of Avila, emphasized the significance of being present to God in each moment. They taught that God is always available in the present, encouraging believers to cultivate a continuous awareness of divine presence.
- The Desert Fathers: Early Christian monastics, known as the Desert Fathers, often focused on the importance of solitude and contemplation. They believed that being present required an inward journey, shedding distractions and noise to encounter God in the stillness of the moment.
- Modern Spirituality: In the modern era, figures like Henri Nouwen and Thomas Merton have echoed these teachings. They emphasize mindfulness, presence, and the sacramental nature of everyday life, reminding individuals that each moment is an opportunity for grace.

2. Philosophical Influences

- Eastern Philosophy: The sacrament of the present moment also draws from Eastern philosophies, particularly Buddhism, which teaches the importance of mindfulness and living in the present. The concept of 'mindfulness' aligns closely with the idea of the sacrament, urging practitioners to fully engage with their experiences.
- Existentialism: Philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger explored the notion of existence in the present. Their works prompt individuals to confront their reality, emphasizing that the present is the only moment that truly exists.

Understanding the Sacrament of the Present Moment

To grasp the essence of the sacrament of the present moment, it is essential to explore its meanings and implications.

1. Definition and Significance

The sacrament of the present moment can be defined as the practice of recognizing and honoring each moment as an encounter with the divine. This perspective transforms ordinary experiences into sacred opportunities for growth, reflection, and connection with God.

- Sacredness of Time: Every moment holds the potential for grace; thus, time becomes a sacred gift. By acknowledging this, individuals can find beauty and meaning in the mundane.
- Awareness and Presence: This sacrament encourages awareness of one's thoughts, feelings, and surroundings. Being present means fully engaging with the moment rather than being consumed by past regrets or future anxieties.

2. Spiritual Dimensions

- Connection to the Divine: The sacrament of the present moment fosters a deeper connection to God. By being present, individuals can experience a heightened sense of spirituality and intimacy with the divine.
- Transformation and Growth: Engaging with the present can lead to profound personal and spiritual transformation. It allows individuals to confront their challenges and embrace their experiences as opportunities for growth.

Practical Applications

Incorporating the sacrament of the present moment into daily life involves practical strategies that encourage mindfulness and presence.

1. Mindfulness Practices

- Meditation: Setting aside time for meditation can cultivate awareness of the present moment. Techniques may include focusing on the breath, observing thoughts, or practicing guided imagery.
- Nature Walks: Spending time in nature, consciously observing the environment, can enhance one's ability to be present. Noticing the sights, sounds, and sensations of nature encourages a deep connection to the moment.
- Gratitude Journaling: Keeping a gratitude journal can help individuals reflect on the beauty of the present. Writing down moments of gratitude fosters appreciation for life's simple joys.

2. Daily Rituals and Mindful Living

- Mindful Eating: Practicing mindfulness during meals can deepen the experience of eating. Focusing on flavors, textures, and the act of nourishment transforms meals into sacred moments.
- Intentional Breathing: Throughout the day, taking a few moments to engage in intentional breathing can ground individuals in the present. This practice helps center the mind and body.
- Digital Detox: Reducing screen time and social media usage can create space for being present. Disconnecting from digital distractions allows individuals to engage more fully with their surroundings and relationships.

Challenges in Embracing the Present Moment

While the sacrament of the present moment offers numerous benefits, individuals may face challenges when trying to embrace it fully.

1. Distraction and Noise

In today's fast-paced world, distractions abound. The constant barrage of information through technology and social media can pull attention away from the present. Overcoming these distractions requires intentional effort and discipline.

2. Fear and Anxiety

Many individuals struggle with fear and anxiety related to the future or past experiences. This emotional baggage can hinder the ability to fully engage with the present moment. Developing coping strategies, such as therapy or mindfulness techniques, can help address these challenges.

The Transformative Potential of the Sacrament of the Present Moment

Embracing the sacrament of the present moment can lead to significant transformation in various aspects of life.

1. Enhanced Relationships

Being present fosters deeper connections with others. When individuals engage fully in conversations and experiences, relationships become more meaningful and authentic.

2. Greater Sense of Purpose

Living in the present can provide clarity and purpose. By focusing on what truly matters in the moment, individuals can align their actions with their values and goals.

3. Increased Resilience

Practicing presence can enhance resilience in the face of challenges. By cultivating awareness and acceptance of the current moment, individuals can approach difficulties with a clearer mind and a more balanced perspective.

Conclusion

The sacrament of the present moment invites individuals to embrace each moment as a sacred gift. By fostering awareness and mindfulness, we can transform our daily experiences into opportunities for spiritual growth and connection. While challenges may arise in our pursuit of presence, the benefits of living fully in the moment—enhanced relationships, a greater sense of purpose, and increased resilience—make it a worthy endeavor. In a world often consumed by distraction and busyness, the sacrament of the present moment serves as a gentle reminder to pause, reflect, and engage with the beauty of life as it unfolds. Embracing this sacrament can ultimately lead to a more fulfilled and spiritually enriched existence.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the 'sacrament of the present moment'?

The 'sacrament of the present moment' refers to the idea of fully engaging with and appreciating the current moment as a sacred experience. It emphasizes mindfulness and the spiritual significance of living in the now.

How can one practice the sacrament of the present

moment?

One can practice this by being mindful, meditating, and focusing on their breath, as well as cultivating gratitude for the present experiences, regardless of their nature.

Why is the sacrament of the present moment important in spirituality?

It encourages individuals to connect with their inner selves, fostering a deeper relationship with the divine and allowing for greater insight into their lives and surroundings.

Who popularized the concept of the sacrament of the present moment?

The concept was popularized by French philosopher and mystic Jean-Pierre de Caussade in his book 'Abandonment to Divine Providence', where he emphasized the importance of surrendering to the present.

What are the benefits of practicing the sacrament of the present moment?

Benefits include reduced anxiety, improved focus, enhanced emotional well-being, and a greater sense of peace and fulfillment in everyday life.

Can the sacrament of the present moment be applied in daily life?

Yes, it can be integrated into daily life by setting aside time for reflection, being present during conversations, and appreciating simple moments throughout the day.

How does the sacrament of the present moment relate to mindfulness?

The sacrament of the present moment is closely related to mindfulness, as both encourage awareness and appreciation of the current experience rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future.

What role does gratitude play in the sacrament of the present moment?

Gratitude is crucial as it shifts focus from what is lacking to what is currently present, allowing individuals to experience joy and contentment in the moment.

How can the sacrament of the present moment enhance personal relationships?

By being fully present with others, individuals can foster deeper connections, improve communication, and create a more supportive and understanding environment in their relationships.

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Discover how to embrace 'the sacrament of the present moment' for a more mindful and fulfilling life. Learn more about its transformative power today!

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