



*Living in Relational Wholeness*

## Coalesce Podcast

### Episode 019 – Silence, Solitude, and Simplicity

#### Note, terms, scripture, practice



Your **stage** of human development has to do with your location in time, your culture, and your education. It has to do with your level of intellectual maturity, how much you’ve been able to integrate thought patterns in a consistent and informed way.

Your **state** of consciousness is more about your level of *inner awakening* than mere correct information.

The ideal tangent is pre-rational, through rational, and on to trans-rational.

Your **state** is your inner aliveness. Your **stage** is your outer awareness.

The desert mystics focused much more on the *how* than the *what*—the *what* of beliefs and doctrine.

Primary practices of the desert fathers and mothers in their search for God:

- 1) leaving, to some extent, the systems of the world (**simplicity**);
- 2) some degree of **solitude** to break from the maddening crowd;
- 3) **silence** to break from the maddening mind; and
- 4) some “technologies” for controlling the compulsivity of mind and the emotions.

All of this was for the sake of growing a person *capable of love and community*.

*The prayer of quiet* was referred to as **contemplation**.

Anthony the Great said: “The man who abides in solitude and is quiet, is delivered from fighting three battles: those of hearing, speech, and sight. Then he will have but one battle to fight—the battle of the heart.”

[Mark 1:13](#)

## Practice: The Sacred Heart

Abba Poemen said, “Teach your mouth to say what is in your heart.” Many of the desert fathers and mothers, as well as the *Philokalia* in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, have described prayer as bringing your thinking down into your heart. It always seemed like soft piety to me until someone taught me how to do it, and I learned the immense benefits of the prayer of the heart. I was often puzzled by the continued return to heart imagery, such as Jesus pointing to his “Sacred Heart” and Mary pointing to her “Immaculate Heart.” I often wonder what people actually do with these images. Are they mere sentiment? Are they objects of worship or objects of transformation? You must return their gaze and invitation for a long time to get the transformative message and healing. Such images keep recurring only because they are speaking something important from the unconscious, maybe even something necessary for the soul’s emergence.

Love lives and thrives in the heart space. It has kept me from wanting to hurt people who have hurt me. It keeps me every day from obsessive, repetitive, or compulsive head games. It can make the difference between being happy and being miserable and negative. Could this be what we are really doing when we say we are praying for someone? Yes, we are holding them in our heart space. Do this in an almost physical sense, and you will see how calmly and quickly it works.

Next time a resentment, negativity, or irritation comes into your mind, and you want to play it out or attach to it, *move that thought or person literally into your heart space*. Dualistic commentaries are lodged in your head; but in your heart, you can surround this negative thought with silence. There it is surrounded with blood, which will often feel warm like coals. In this place, it is almost impossible to comment, judge, create story lines, or remain antagonistic. You are in a place that does not create or feed on contraries but is the natural organ of life, embodiment, and love. Now the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart have been transferred to you. They are pointing for you to join them there. The “sacred heart” is then your heart too.