

Silence of the Mind and Faith of the Heart
From Our Head to Our Heart
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Introduction

Let us begin with a story about the disciple who asked his Master, “What can I do to attain God?” The Master responded by asking the disciple another question: ‘What can you do to make the sun rise?’ The disciple not too happily responded, ‘Nothing at all. So why are you giving us all these methods of prayer and growing in virtue?’ The Master replied, ‘To make sure you’re awake when the sun rises.’”¹

This story is important for anyone who takes the System of Virtues seriously and is motivated to grow in the Five Silences. The Five Silences emphasize the need for self-discipline, but we also must keep in mind that all the self-discipline in the world, including the perfect practice of the Five Silences, will not “make the sun rise.” Such discipline will not enable us to “attain God.” However, the self-control demanded by the practice of the Five Silences will indeed enhance our ability to “wake up” and be fully present for the “rising of the sun,” thus enabling us to bask in the sunlight (i.e., the grace and compassion of our loving God). Nonetheless, we cannot make the sun rise. We can only make sure that we are awake when the sun does arise. Waking up is particularly important because we often do not even realize we are “asleep” spiritually because of our lack of regard for the Five Silences in our life. Our soul is drowsy, out of focus, and in a stupor because it is weighed down with all the “noise” of our words, our unconscious signs, our unruly passions, our out of control imagination, and especially the clamor and turmoil of our mind.

I find it extremely significant that certain virtues within the System of Virtues could be described as what I would call “active” virtues (i.e., virtues that call for our ego to assert more self-control in our lives). These active virtues call for increased self-discipline and willpower on our part. I see the following virtues as active virtues: the Five Silences and recollection among the preparation virtues; the renewal of resolutions and the resistance of temptations among the purification virtues, but only the renunciation of the world among the consummation virtues. The exercise of these active virtues gives us a stronger sense of control over our lives and strengthens our ego structure that gives us a sense of self and self-identity, which is a prerequisite for healthy psychological and spiritual development, especially in the first half of life.

The other “virtues” among the System of Virtues, such as preparatory obedience and the support of mortification among the preparation virtues; patience, recourse to counsel, distrust of self, and confidence in God among the purification virtues; and abnegation of self, modesty, and humility among the consummation virtues; I would characterize as “receptive” virtues (i.e., virtues that call for us, for our ego to grow in the ability to surrender or “let go” of control in our lives). The exercise of these “receptive” virtues gives our ego structure, a necessary flexibility or resilience. Without the exercise of “receptive virtues” we tend to develop an overly rigid ego structure that calls for an unhealthy need for control in our lives, especially in the second half of life.

¹ Margaret Silf, *More Wisdom Stories* (Oxford, England: Lion Books, 2013), 14.

In other words, if we consider the entire process of growth in the System of Virtues, the preparation virtues are split between 50 percent “active” and 50 percent “receptive.” The purification virtues are only 33 percent “active” but 67 percent “receptive,” while the consummation virtues are a mere 25 percent “active” but an overwhelming 75 percent receptive.” Hence, as we might expect, growth along the spiritual path, growth in “waking up,” calls for more letting go and more self-surrender, as we advance on our way to becoming more spiritually “awake.” This process of growing spiritually in letting go, especially in the second half of life, is well described in *Falling Upward*, Richard Rohr’s popular book.² Of course, letting go, learning to give up control to another is also what is necessary for growing in our ability to love another person in any type of mature, healthy relationship. This distinction between “active” and “receptive” virtues within the System of Virtues is basic and important to keep in mind when we consider the Five Silences and their overall purpose, especially in relation to the other virtues. It is important not to consider the Five Silences in isolation because we are then in danger of forgetting their long-term purpose in facilitating our spiritual awakening.

I emphasize the importance of growing in the ability to let go or surrender in our spiritual journey because I believe the role of the “active” preparation virtues, such as the Five Silences, is to “discipline” our ego and establish sufficient ego strength so that we have a healthy, mature self-identity that we can eventually surrender in love to others, and ultimately to the Other. The ultimate goal of the Five Silences is not only a healthy, well disciplined ego that has a mastery of its nonverbal signs, its words, its passions, its imagination, and its mental processes, but also to eventually enable our ego to let go of and give the gift of our self in love and in faith to another and to the Other. Throughout this paper, because of its importance, we will often come back to the ultimate goal of self-surrender in love as we explore the role of the silence of the mind in the overall spiritual journey, especially in prayer and in developing “faith of the heart.”

My thesis in this paper is that one of the purposes of the silence of the mind is to enable us, especially in prayer, to let go in love, more and more. We will see that the silence of the mind, which has for one of its initial purposes the quieting of our “head” activities, ultimately is meant to enable our “heart” to find its “voice” more and more, especially in prayer. This process, we will argue, is not unlike Mary who “kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart” (Lk 2:19, 51). Early on in the process there is undoubtedly an “active” silencing or disciplining of the mind, but this silence of the mind in prayer eventually enables us to let go and to trust more and more in the movements of grace, thus enabling us to treasure our experience, much like Mary. Paradoxically, as we develop in this way, we are less active and less in control, but we are more open to what is happening to us and within us that we can “treasure.” As Father Chaminade says, “Faith, especially faith of the heart, is a great gift of God.”³ Of course, only if we give up control and are in a receptive mode are we eligible to receive a gift. This “letting go,” this treasuring, this “faith of the heart” can lead us to what we have traditionally called “union with God” and we might even call “Marianist mysticism,” a full awakening to the bright radiance of the “Rising Sun.”

² Richard Rohr, *Falling Upward* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011).

³ Antonio Gascón, SM, *Reason, Revelation, and Faith of the Heart* (Dayton, Ohio: NACMS, 2007), 155.

Having made some introductory reflections on the Five Silences and the System of Virtues and their role in spiritual development, especially in aiding us in giving up control and letting go, we now turn our attention to Father Chaminade's notion of "faith of the heart" and its importance for him in the spiritual journey. As we explore Chaminade's views on "faith of the heart" it also will become evident how important the aforementioned "letting go" is in developing a "faith of the heart." Once we have explored Chaminade's "faith of the heart" we can then show how not only silence of the mind but also certain contemporary movements—such as mindfulness, centering prayer, and contemplative prayer—can aid a member of the Marianist Family in nurturing "faith of the heart" in one's life, particularly through prayer.

Faith of the Heart According to Father Chaminade

The introduction to this paper began with a story of the Master teaching his disciple the limitations of ascetical practices in "attaining God." We now begin this section on "faith of the heart" with a story about the critical importance of the heart in our life journey.

This is a story about an "old pilgrim making his way to the Himalayan Mountains in the bitter cold of winter when it began to rain. An innkeeper said to him, 'How will you ever get there in this kind of weather, my good man?' The old man answered cheerfully, 'My heart got there first, so it is easy for the rest of me to follow.'"⁴

I believe Father Chaminade would have loved this story because it expresses so well the central role of the heart in developing one's vision and purpose in life, especially for our spiritual journey. For Chaminade, faith and love were two sides of the same coin. The expression "The one who believes is also the one who loves" sums up the intellectual and the pastoral dimension of the phrase "faith of the heart."⁵

The earliest beginnings of Father Chaminade's notion of "faith of the heart" can be traced to his early preaching to the Sodality (1800 to 1815) during his midlife years, from the ages of 39 to 54, when the notion of "faith of the heart" was still implicit in his conferences and writings.⁶ But his further development of the notion in a more explicit manner comes about later during that period of his life when he was in his mid-fifties to the latter part of his sixties (age 54-67) and his two new religious congregations were in the early stages of development (1815-1828).⁷ However, in the 1830s when he was in his 70s there is an even fuller development of those views according to Antonio Gascón in *Reason, Revelation, and Faith of the Heart*.⁸ "This is evident in the Retreat of 1827 to the community of Saint Remy and in the 'Manual of Direction to the Religious Life and Virtues in the Society of Mary,' written at the end of 1829"⁹ and then later in a letter to Father Lalanne on January 23, 1833.

First of all, in the Retreat of 1827 Chaminade begins with remarks on faith as found in the decrees of the Council of Trent. This faith is founded on God and "comes through an illumination of our spirit, but above all through 'charity' because faith resides,

⁴ Anthony DeMello, *Taking Flight: A Book of Story Meditations* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 159.

⁵ Gascón, *Reason*, 96.

⁶ Gascón, *Reason*, 153.

⁷ Gascón, *Reason*, 154.

⁸ Gascón, *Reason*, 155.

⁹ Gascón, *Reason*, 155.

above all in the heart.”¹⁰ For Chaminade it is “necessary to have a ‘disposition of the heart’ in order to believe, ‘love for the truth’ is needed.”¹¹

Of course, it (faith) must be inspired by charity. Faith must not simply resemble a light in the mind; it must be in the heart. The heart itself must be inclined toward faith, the love of truth. It is Saint Paul who says that faith of the heart is what justifies us.¹²

Two years later we see an even more developed expression of “faith of the heart” in the *Manual of Direction*. Here the object of “faith of the heart” is Jesus Christ, and to strengthen our faith it is necessary to make “acts of faith” accompanied by “sincere affections of the heart.” For Chaminade this is the faith extolled at the Council of Trent in Romans 10:10 and in James 2:19.¹³

Four years later, Father Chaminade, now 72 years of age, develops even further his articulation of “faith of the heart” in a letter to Lalanne on January 23, 1833, which Gascón summarizes in the following manner:

The position of Father Chaminade can be stated in these terms: the knowledge of revealed truths known through intellectual faculties should be located in the heart. We do not enter upon the obedience of faith through knowledge of revealed truths, but only through “submission of the heart, and the heart becomes submissive only when it loves.” Faith is above all in the heart. Faith involves the submission of the heart. This faith is a “great gift of God.”¹⁴

Father Chaminade summarizes his views on “faith of the heart” with the formula “to know, to love, and to serve God” as our three duties.¹⁵ The interior process begins with knowing the truth of God that then develops into the desire of the heart which finally manifests itself in action.¹⁶

Although “faith of the heart” is expressed in action and in service, prayer is necessary for “faith of the heart” to be nurtured and to grow. For Chaminade, faith must so penetrate prayer that it becomes a “prayer of faith and of the presence of God. He never separates faith from prayer. Faith and prayer is his pastoral theme and is one of the central points of his teaching on faith.”¹⁷

Because prayer is so central for Chaminade in developing “faith of the heart” we will now turn our attention to silence of the mind and three key contemporary movements related to the exercise of prayer (i.e., mindfulness, centering prayer, and contemplative prayer). We will explore how each of these three contemporary movements can contribute to the development of “faith of the heart” among members of the Marianist

¹⁰ Gascón, *Reason*, 154.

¹¹ Gascón, *Reason*, 154.

¹² Gascón, *Reason*, 155.

¹³ Gascón, *Reason*, 155.

¹⁴ Gascón, *Reason*, 155.

¹⁵ Gascón, *Reason*, 160.

¹⁶ Gascón, *Reason*, 161.

¹⁷ Gascón, *Reason*, 161.

Family in our contemporary world. We begin with a consideration of silence of the mind and the mindfulness movement of recent years.

Silence of the Mind and Mindfulness

We begin with another story to introduce our new topic, silence of the mind and mindfulness. This story illustrates extremely well the necessity for silence of the mind in order to practice mindfulness. The story comes from the introduction to *Timeshifting* by Stephan Rechtschaffen.

There is a well-known story of a Zen monk who, pursued by a ravenous tiger, climbed down a cliff—and hung by a branch above a ledge he found inhabited by an equally ferocious tiger. Growing next to the branch was a bush with a single strawberry, which the monk picked. The monk smelled the strawberry, felt the strawberry, bit the strawberry...and thought to himself, “How delicious!”¹⁸

Jon Kabat-Zinn is considered most responsible for developing and promoting mindfulness in the United States, as well as integrating it into the medical field in recent years. In a YouTube presentation to Google employees in November of 2007 he defines mindfulness as “paying attention to the present moment as if your life depends upon it.”¹⁹ The above story captures very well that plea of contemporary mindfulness to “pay attention to the present moment as if your life depends upon it” because the Zen monk does exactly that under very stressful conditions. He attends wholeheartedly to the present moment, represented in the story as the delicious strawberry, and does not allow himself to be distracted, stressed out, or preoccupied with the past represented by the first tiger or the future represented by the second tiger. This story, as we will see, also illustrates well the importance of the second objective of the silence of the mind, that of excluding “from our minds thinking that which is harmful to our purpose or unwholesome for our life.”²⁰

The two purposes of the silence of the mind are described by Quentin Hakenewerth in *Growing in the Virtues of Jesus*.

The virtue of silence of the mind includes two main practices: 1) to fill our minds with information, teaching, and values which are consistent with the truth and with our calling, and 2) to exclude from our minds thinking that which is harmful to our purpose or unwholesome for our life.²¹

The story of the Zen monk shows well how the monk is able to exclude from his mind anxiously thinking about what would be “harmful” and “unwholesome” and to focus on the present “delicious” moment. By a truly heroic exercise of the silence of the mind the monk excludes both tigers from his attention and enters completely into a

¹⁸ Stephan Rechtschaffen, *Timeshifting* (New York: Doubleday Books, 1996), 5.

¹⁹ Jon Kabat-Zinn, “Mindfulness with Jon Kabat-Zinn,” YouTube Video, 1:12:04, Nov. 12. 2007, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nwwKbM_vJc.

²⁰ Quentin Hakenewerth, SM, *Growing in the Virtues of Jesus* (Dayton, Ohio: NACMS, 2008), 34.

²¹ Hakenewerth, *Growing in the Virtues*, 34.

relationship with the delicious strawberry in the present moment with all its wonderful possibilities.

In my opinion, contemporary mindfulness utilizes only the second purpose of the silence of mind. Mindfulness is not particularly concerned with filling “our minds with information, teaching, and values which are consistent with the truth and with our calling.” Mindfulness is nonjudgmental and concerned with the present moment as it is, whatever it is—pleasant or unpleasant, right or wrong. Mindfulness focuses on the present moment with all of its challenges and potential.

The popularity of mindfulness throughout the United States in recent years is a testimony to our need for balance and sanity in our high-energy and fast-paced, highly-competitive culture. Mindfulness, by focusing exclusively on the present moment and excluding any thoughts about the past or the future, utilizes the second discipline of silence of mind, namely, “excluding from our mind thinking that which is harmful to our purpose or unwholesome to our life.”²² Utilizing this discipline, silence of the mind enables us to slow down, relax at least momentarily, and appreciate and live more fully in the present moment. Mindfulness specifically employs the discipline of excluding from our mind any thought about that “tiger” from our past (i.e., any regrets or guilt about the past), as well as that future “tiger” (i.e., our anxiety about our unknown future). By completely mentally silencing both “tigers,” the past and the future, we are able to slow down dramatically and concentrate wholeheartedly on the present moment, the only moment we ever have. Later in this paper we will see how important it is to be fully in the present moment when it comes to prayer and “faith of the heart.”

Silence of the Mind and Centering Prayer

We begin our treatment of the silence of the mind in the contemporary movement called centering prayer and with another brief-but-fitting story:

An old man would sit motionless in church for hours on end.
One day a priest asked him what God talked to him about.
“God doesn’t talk. He just listens” was his reply.
“Well, then what do you talk about?”
“I don’t talk either. I just listen.”²³

This wonderful story illustrates so well how silence of the mind can play a role in authentic prayer. It is not necessary to think in order to pray. In fact, in centering prayer one is expected to silence one’s thinking.

According to Thomas Keating in *Intimacy with God*:

Centering Prayer is a method of prayer that comes out of the Christian tradition, principally the *Cloud of Unknowing*, by an anonymous fourteenth-century author, and St. John of the Cross. It brings us into the presence of God and thus fosters the contemplative attitudes of listening and receptivity. It is not contemplation in the strict sense, which in Catholic tradition has always been regarded as a pure

²² Hakenewerth, *Growing in the Virtues*, 34.

²³ DeMello, *Taking Flight*, 9.

gift of the Spirit, but rather it is a preparation for contemplation by reducing the obstacles caused by the hyperactivity of our minds and of our lives.²⁴

Hopefully, when we read that centering prayer is “a preparation for contemplation,” which is “a pure gift of the Spirit,” it reminds us of our original story of the Master and his questioning disciple about attaining God. Recalling the story helps us realize that this type of prayer “does not cause the sun to rise” but is another method, like silence of the mind, which assures us that “we will be awake when the sun rises.” We also read that centering prayer helps to reduce “the obstacles caused by the hyperactivity of our minds and of our lives.” In other words, centering prayer, much like the mindfulness movement, is utilizing the self-discipline involved in silence of the mind that excludes “from our minds thinking that which is harmful to our purpose or unwholesome to our life.”²⁵

Although it is clear from the material above that both mindfulness and centering prayer require a certain silence of the mind, Thomas Keating in *Intimacy with God* highlights a crucial distinction between the Eastern methods (i.e., the mindfulness movement) and centering prayer. “Eastern methods are primarily concerned with awareness. Centering Prayer is concerned with divine love.”²⁶ This distinction is critical and helps us to see that both silence of the mind and mindfulness can help us to quiet “unnecessary and unhelpful thoughts”; but for a Christian and a member of the Marianist Family, the goal needs to be “faith of the heart”—growth in love, in a personal love for Christ.

Given the nature of this paper, my reflections on centering prayer will be rather limited and focused on the importance of silence of the mind in that style of prayer. Thomas Keating describes centering prayer as a “preparation,” a “first step on the ladder of contemplative prayer.”²⁷ He describes it further in another place:

The root of prayer is silence. We may think of prayer as thoughts or feelings expressed in words, but this is only one of its forms. “Prayer,” according to Evagrius, “is the laying aside of thoughts.” This definition presupposes that there are thoughts. Centering prayer is not so much the absence of thoughts as detachment from them. It is the opening of mind and heart, body and emotions—our whole being—to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond words, thoughts, and emotions—beyond, in other words, the psychological content of the present moment. In centering prayer we do not deny or repress what is in our consciousness. We simply accept the fact of whatever is there and go beyond it, not by effort, but by letting go of whatever is there.²⁸

Therefore, in centering prayer the practice of the silence of the mind would be described as detachment from our thoughts, the letting go of our thoughts during prayer so that we can go beyond them.

²⁴ Thomas Keating, *Intimacy with God* (New York: Crossroad, 2006), 11.

²⁵ Hakenewerth, *Growing in the Virtues*, 34.

²⁶ Keating, *Intimacy with God*, 125,

²⁷ Keating, *Intimacy with God*, 55.

²⁸ Thomas Keating, *Open Mind, Open Heart* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 12.

The method by which an individual can detach from their thoughts is to pick a word that represents our intention to consent to God's presence and action within us, e.g., God, Abba, love, peace, or some other word and return to that word whenever we feel our intention diminishing.²⁹

As a rule we do not know when our prayer becomes contemplation in the strict sense. We only know that we are moving in this direction through our practice and that the Spirit is moving toward us. As our practice becomes more habitual, the actions of the Spirit's gift of wisdom and understanding become more powerful and gradually take over our prayer, enabling us to rest habitually in the presence of God. This experience is not necessarily felt during prayer, but is experienced in its effects in daily life.³⁰

According to Keating, centering prayer is "probably the most receptive of the practices designed to facilitate the movement toward contemplation."³¹ Centering prayer does not emphasize concentration or attention so much as intention.³²

It is an exercise of intention. It is our will, our faculty of choice, that we are cultivating. The will is also our faculty of spiritual love, which is primarily a choice. It may be accompanied by sentiments of love but does not require them. Divine love is not a feeling. It is a disposition or attitude of ongoing self-surrender and concern for others similar to the concern God has for us and every living thing.³³

Undoubtedly, Father Chaminade would fully endorse the centering prayer movement. As we saw earlier, "faith of the heart" for him was all about submission of the heart in love or, in other words, what Keating calls an "attitude of ongoing self-surrender." Of course, this "self-surrender" is the same letting go that we spoke earlier about that is so characteristic of growth in the System of Virtues.

Silence of the Mind and Contemplative Prayer

For this section we will consider another contemporary prayer movement very similar to the centering prayer movement but associated with the Center for Contemplation and Action and Father Richard Rohr, OFM, a Franciscan spiritual author and international speaker. However, we begin with the four stages of prayer cited in *Taking Flight* by Anthony De Mello.

The Four Stages of Prayer

I talk, you listen
You talk, I listen
Neither talks, both listen.

²⁹ Keating, *Intimacy with God*, 57.

³⁰ Keating, *Intimacy with God*, 55.

³¹ Keating, *Intimacy with God*, 57.

³² Keating, *Intimacy with God*, 57.

³³ Keating, *Intimacy with God*, 57.

Neither talks, neither listens: Silence³⁴

The fourth stage, Silence, attempts to capture the essence of contemplative prayer. Contemplative prayer, just like centering prayer, is beyond thoughts and beyond words. Contemplative prayer, like centering prayer, is about being fully present in the silence, both external and internal silence. Of course, authentic, mindful presence on our part includes especially the heart—in other words—“faith of the heart.”

Chaminade’s development of the notion of “faith of the heart” in the first half of the nineteenth century is especially remarkable in light of Richard Rohr’s description in *Naked Now* of how Western Christianity lost its tradition of contemplative prayer over the last five hundred years. He writes:

Most contemplatives in the last five hundred years were like Teresa of Avila, who says in her autobiography that she suffered so because “thinking prayer” was presented to her as the only form. Not until she discovered the Franciscan Francisco de Osuna, who still understood the older tradition, did she find “her master” as she says.³⁵

This alternative form of prayer was called “mental prayer” and that is exactly what it was. Mental prayer was an essential part of my formation as a Marianist religious in the early 1960s, and I presume for other male and female religious in formation throughout the world in that pre-Vatican II period.

Rohr explains well the limitations of mental processing, thinking, when it comes to prayer and, therefore, the need for silence of the mind.

The mind by nature is intent on judging, controlling, and analyzing instead of seeing, tasting, and loving. This is exactly why it cannot be present or live in the naked now. The mind wants a job and loves to process things. The key to stopping this game is, quite simply, peace, silence, or stillness. This was always seen as God’s primary language, “with everything else a poor translation,” as Fr. Thomas Keating wisely observes. I would even say that on the practical level, silence and God will be experienced simultaneously—and even as the same thing. And afterward, you will want to remain even more silent. The overly verbal religion of the last five hundred years...cannot follow Jesus and go into the desert for forty days, where there is nothing to say, to prove, to think, or to defend.³⁶

Because of the limitations of the rational mind when it comes to prayer, not only Christianity but also “the great religions of the world found methods to compartmentalize, but not eliminate the over-control of the thinking, rational mind, through practices such as prayer, meditation, contemplation.”³⁷ In that way, the rational mind now becomes the “servant instead of the master.”³⁸ The objective of utilizing

³⁴ DeMello, *Taking Flight*, 29.

³⁵ Richard Rohr, *Naked Now* (New York: Crossroad, 2009), 113.

³⁶ Rohr, *Naked Now*, 54.

³⁷ Rohr, *Naked Now*, 57.

³⁸ Rohr, *Naked Now*, 57.

certain spiritual practices like the mantra is to make the rational mind a “servant” rather than a “master.” In that way the heart can come to the foreground and “faith of the heart” can then blossom. Father Chaminade came closest to contemplative prayer, it seems, when he recommended meditating on the Creed, evidently suggesting that the individual recite internally over and over the articles of the Creed, which became a mantra of sort.³⁹

Here is where Richard Rohr, I believe, helps us to integrate all that we have been treating thus far—including silencing the mind, being “mindful” or totally present, and “faith of the heart” in prayer. He writes:

People who are fully present know how to see fully, rightly, and truthfully. Presence is the one thing necessary and in many ways, the hardest thing of all. Just try to keep your heart open, your mind without division or resistance, and your body not somewhere else. Presence is the practical, daily task of all mature religions and all spiritual disciplines.⁴⁰

Here we see the importance of mindfulness—that is, being totally present to the moment. We also see the vital role of the silence of the mind, where the mind is our servant, not our master, enabling us to be totally present and not distracted by the past or the future. Contemplative prayer and centering prayer are both approaches to prayer that require mindfulness as well as silence of the mind to help us be fully present to Christ “with our heart open and our mind without division or resistance and our body not somewhere else.” I believe both centering prayer and contemplative prayer promote what Chaminade called “faith of the heart.” By utilizing either centering prayer or contemplative prayer on a daily basis we grow in the ability to live our lives in a “mindful” manner (i.e., fully present with our heart open, our mind without division, and our body not somewhere else). That is a lifelong task and challenge, but it promises abundant fruitfulness in our lives.

Conclusion and Recommendations

We begin this final section with two stories to illustrate the full development and fruition of “faith of the heart.” The first story is entitled “Signs of Daybreak.”

A rabbi once asked his students how they could tell when night had ended and the day was on its way back.

“Is it when you can see an animal in the distance and can tell whether it is a sheep or a dog?”

“No” answered the rabbi.

“Is it when you can look at a tree in the distance and tell whether it is a fig tree or a peach tree?”

“No.”

“Well then,” the students demanded, “when is it?”

³⁹ Gascón, *Reason*, 162.

⁴⁰ Rohr, *Naked Now*, 60.

“It is when you look on the face of another human being and see that he or she is your brother or sister. Because if you cannot do that, then no matter what time it is, it is still night and you are still in the dark.”⁴¹

The full development of “faith of the heart” is expressed especially in our relationships with others—that is, when we are finally able to see everyone truly as our brothers and our sisters and serve them wholeheartedly, which brings us to our second story.

It intrigued the congregation to see their rabbi disappear each week on the eve of the Sabbath. They suspected he was secretly meeting the Almighty, so they deputed one of their number to follow him.

This is what the man saw: the rabbi disguised himself in peasant clothes and served a paralyzed Gentile woman in her cottage, cleaning out the room and preparing a Sabbath meal for her.

When the spy got back, the congregation asked, “Where did the rabbi go? Did he ascend to heaven?”

“No,” the man replied, “he went even higher.”⁴²

One glaring limitation of this paper is that it may give the impression that prayer is sufficient for the full development and fruition of “faith of the heart.” Of course, this is by no means true. For Father Chaminade, as mentioned earlier, the phrase “to know, love, and serve” best described the complete process involved in “faith of the heart.” In other words, “faith of the heart” is incomplete if it is not expressed in service (i.e., “cleaning out the room and preparing a Sabbath meal” for the Gentile woman). In Christian terms we would say “faith of the heart” includes and leads directly to serving others, especially the least of my brothers and sisters. As Gascón observes in *Reason, Revelation, and Faith of the Heart*, faith for Father Chaminade begins with *knowledge* of the truth of God and develops into a *desire of the heart*, which finally manifests itself in *action*⁴³ (“to know, love and serve”). All three elements constitute “faith of the heart.” This phrase “to know, love, and serve” was so important to Father Chaminade that it was chosen very appropriately to be the motto for both the Daughters of Mary and the Society of Mary for the celebration of their bicentennials in 2016 and 2017 respectively.

To me, another key insight of Father Chaminade concerning “faith of the heart” is expressed so well in a letter, at the age of 72, to his close disciple, Lalanne, when he writes that we do not enter upon obedience of faith through knowledge of revealed truths, but only through “the submission of the heart, and the heart becomes submissive only when it loves.”⁴⁴ To say that the “heart becomes submissive only when it loves” is a keen observation about human experience and goes to the core of his views on “faith of the

⁴¹ Silf, *Wisdom Stories*, 86.

⁴² DeMello, *Taking Flight*, 162.

⁴³ Gascón, *Reason*, 155.

⁴⁴ Gascón, *Reason*, 160.

heart.” Another way of saying that is to say that our heart only becomes truly vulnerable when we love another, whether another person or our God. So the ability to become vulnerable, to let go, and to surrender is key to our personal and faith development. Hence, we need to advance in the System of Virtues and particularly in the silence of the mind. Along with serving our sisters and our brothers, nothing is more beneficial in that pursuit than authentic centering prayer or contemplative prayer, which nurtures “faith of the heart.”

Therefore, to me it would be more appropriate for us as members of the Marianist Family to only speak or write about “faith of the heart” and avoid using the term “faith” alone, by itself. As disciples of Father Chaminade, the only faith that we are interested in promoting and developing is “faith of the heart,” and hopefully “faith of the heart” would be characteristic of members of the Marianist Family.

Finally, I have heard it said that all research is “me search.” I know that is true for me in the case of this paper. This project represents my attempt in recent years to move from “my mind to my heart” in both my prayer and in my interpersonal relationships. I have found that silence of the mind and mindfulness, as well as centering prayer and contemplative prayer, to be extremely helpful to me in paying more attention to my “heart” and developing in my own way “faith of the heart.” Since I am now well into my 70s I find it extremely interesting that Father Chaminade, as mentioned earlier, did not write explicitly about “faith of the heart,” as far as we know, until his late 50s and continued to develop his notion about “faith of the heart” well into his 70s. Perhaps his own aging process, his own growth in “letting go” played a role in his treatment of the subject. For me, the aging process, along with silence of the mind and mindfulness, as well as centering and contemplative prayer, have all played a significant role in my own “slowing down” and “letting go” of my need to be in “control” so much in my life and develop “faith of the heart.”