

# The Two Pillars

by SC Biela

## Forward:

The truth will set you free.

Discuss how precious the decision to turn back.

Contrition demolishes the pedestals. Father Daniel spoke of the difference between contrition and remorse or regret during our last Morning of Reflection. How does that compare with Biela's notion of contrition?

## Chapter 1 Human Pedestals

- Being loved because of my perfection is one kind of pedestal. What are some of the other common pedestals we might encounter in ourselves, or in our guides?
- 'barriers in the realm of the unconscious that close us off from the action of grace are the most dangerous... all defense mechanisms operate in this area.' Can you identify some means that have been successful in penetrating these kinds of barriers?
- Discuss Biela's notion that we do not want to need God's forgiveness.

## Chapter 2 The Love Not Yet Fully Uncovered

- The supremacy of Mary in our struggle to move ahead in faith
- The challenge to live fully in the truth of who we are
- God loves you as you are. God loves me as I am.

## Chapter 3 The Way of Contrition

- How our perception of progress with its linear form deceives us in the path to God & takes away from the endless cycle of feedback of discovering the truth about our evil.
- We turn away from it through contrition and submit to grace
- Give some examples of how helplessness can open one to God's loving presence. Use the notion of a 'shub' (biblical word which means to retrace one's steps in Hebrew)
- Authentic contrition has a painful dimension p,45
- Compare guilt and contrition p.49

## Chapter 4 Toward Gratitude

- "Gratitude is a pillar that is born gradually in a crucible of experience – in a crucible of more or less painful trials of faith." Discuss how our understanding of this statement will help us guide and accompany women on their spiritual journey.

- St. Therese of Lisieux states, "Everything is grace." Everything calls you to be grateful. Why is it important to be able to distinguish authentic gratitude from Parasitical gratitude? How can we help ourselves and our guidees to mature into authentic gratitude?
- Biela asks the question: "Do you want to be a channel of grace for others?" something that requires you to contritely acknowledge your evil and be grateful for every grace that you experience. Can you think of an instance when you or a guide was a channel of grace for another? How do we help our guidees or ourselves be such a channel of grace for others?
- When you look through the lens of gratitude it "causes you to perceive God" (pg. 87). How does the nightly examen prayer help us to find God in our day and move towards authentic gratitude? Can you give an example of this?
- What are the fruits of ingratitude according to the saints? " A moment of reflection about what happened before you sinned may reveal to you that you were ungrateful."(pg. 87).

### **Immersed in the Fire of God's Love**

#### **Chapter 5 God's Love Amid the Unfaithfulness of Man**

- "When we delude ourselves of thinking that we are better than we really are, we do not notice divine gifts and we do not thank God." (Pg.95). Biela uses scripture and stories to illustrate this statement. How can we help ourselves and the women we guide recognize the gifts God gives us (them) and as a result turn to God in thanksgiving?

#### **Chapter 6 Contrition and Gratitude**

- "God's burning action, which happens both through people who are placed on our path and through the penetrating divine light of truth, is the path where the human heart's hardness is destroyed. This action prepares us to be united with the One who is the purest love and who cannot be united with a soul that is covered with the dirt of evil, sin, and unfaithfulness." (Pg. 128). Discuss how we, as spiritual directors, are involved in this delicate and often painful work of God. Can you describe how have you been able to accompany and support a directee through this process? Can you suggest strategies that have worked for you personally or in a directee/director relationship?