

PARISH BOOK STUDY

The Holy Longing by Fr. Ron Rolheiser

Large Group Conversation, Nov. 8, 2011



Summary:

The evening was facilitated by Janet Schaeffler, OP and there were approximately 60 participants. The opening prayer was a call to Change our Hearts and be open to God's movement and growth in our lives.

The first three chapters of the book focused on three major themes:

- What is spirituality?
- What are today's struggles in spirituality?
- What are the non-negotiable essentials in spirituality (as suggested by the author)?

Table discussion centered on the following questions:

- Did you discover an idea you hadn't thought of before?
- Did you realize something new about yourself?
- How would you define spirituality?
- Which of the struggles in spirituality do you experience?
- What, for you, are the essentials of spirituality, of discipleship?



Feedback to the large group: *(Comments from the tables)*

- Spirituality is always evolving – we never reach perfection.
- Some found the first two chapters difficult to understand, conversation with others helped.
- Visual images might be helpful to explain some of the concepts in the book.
- Spirituality should be joyful!
- Balance is important and it was articulated in the pillars of spirituality.
- We need a mellowness of heart and spirit. This was an ah-ha understanding for some present.
- To be HOLY is to be FULLY HUMAN.

There were additional questions offered for table discussion:

- Is there something different I've done in my life as a result of reading this book?
- Is there something different I'd like to begin doing after reading this book? What would help me do it?
- How will I change my heart or mind?
- Who do I know living or deceased, who is a model of the spirituality – discipleship we're talking about?



Feedback to the large group: *(Comments from the tables)*

- The author's ideas were a springboard for further conversations.
- We ALL have a piece of the truth to share. Ongoing conversation with others is important.
- The book emphasized the importance of passing on our faith to our children, to offer them a foundation to carry into their future.
- There are many facets or definitions of spirituality.
- Spirituality is "Seeking the face of God."
- For some this is the first "religious book" ever read, other than the bible.
- It's important to understand that the author is presenting a point of view, but it can't be inclusive of all understanding on the topic. It's not a formal catechism, its ONE view of spirituality at this time in our culture.
- We're looking forward to reading the next section and the subsequent conversations.

The conversation concluded at 8:45 PM.

The next gathering will take place on Tuesday, January 10 at 7:15 PM. The evening will cover material up to chapter five. All are invited and encouraged to attend!

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