



- A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -

Part 4: Building the Kingdom of God on Earth

4. Purity of Heart

Purity of heart is more than just 'chastity' in the traditional sense of sexual purity, but involves honesty and the integrity of our whole being. To understand purity of heart we must, therefore, first understand the meaning of the word 'heart' itself.

...in the spirit of 'The Beatitudes', and as pilgrims and strangers on their way to the home of the Father, they should strive to purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power.
Rule 11

In the Old Testament 'the heart' indicated the seat of the emotions—such as we say, 'I love you with all my heart'. The lives of Francis and Clare demonstrate many of the characteristics associated with one who is pure in heart—

- Selflessness
- Clear sense of purpose
- Compassion
- Complete trust in God
- Awareness of God's continual presence
- Honesty and integrity



Discuss the meaning of each of these in the lives of two OFS saints listed in the *Appendix*

Blest are the pure in heart,
For they shall see our God,
The secret of the Lord is theirs,
Their soul is Christ's abode.

The Lord, who left the heavens
Our life and peace to bring,
To dwell in lowliness with men,
Their Pattern and their King:

Still to the lowly soul
He doth himself impart,
And for his dwelling and his throne
Chooses the pure in heart.

Lord, we thy presence seek;
May ours this blessing be;
Give us a pure and lowly heart
A temple meet for thee.

John Keble, 1792-1866

Purity of heart means freedom from unworthy motives. It means a continual search for God. The recompense for this seeking of God will be the direct vision of God, eventually...We should try to keep in our minds the vision of the good that has yet to come...Our Lord counsels us to lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven. If our treasure is in heaven our hearts will be there also...We should look forward to the day when we shall go to our Father in heaven; when Christ will come and will take us to himself, so that we may be with him and with the Father for ever in heaven. Purity of heart will keep this longing alive within us.

Peter O'Grady *Rebuild My Church* (p 37-38)



Scripture—

Ps 24. 3-5

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully. They will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of their salvation.

Heb 12. 1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.