

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Jan 2nd 2018

Memorial of Saints Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church

“I write you these things about those who would deceive you.” 1 John 2:26

While in discernment of a meaningful New Year’s resolution, the above passage from 1 John prompted me towards entering a new avenue in the hopes of shaping my faith on a deeper level. The above-referenced passage was written for all people for all times. Deceit is part of human nature. We live in a world filled with false and misleading information/news, etc. This past year, we experienced the overwhelming “fake news” phenomenon. The following paragraphs provide a brief glimpse into Adrienne von Speyr (1902-1967), with whom I look forward to journeying with through the New Year:

Until recently, I hadn’t heard of Adrienne von Speyr. St. John Paul II had convened a symposium examining her works in 1985. Another symposium was recently held which led to an article written in the Omaha Archdiocesan Newspaper, *The Catholic Voice*. While reading this article, I was drawn to Adrienne von Speyr because I identified with her for several reasons: she was a wife, a mother, a daughter, she was born into a Protestant family, she underwent a significant conversion, she had a thirst for joyful adherence to all the teachings of the church, and she had an attitude of total surrender to the truth.

Another draw to her for me was the experience she shared with her classmates about being visited by an angel that told her “that the Jesuits were people who loved Jesus totally, and that the truth of God was greater than that of men, and as a result one could not always tell people everything exactly as one understands it in God.” (*First Glance at Adrienne von Speyr*, page 21). She also shared with her spiritual director, Hans Urs von Balthasar, a great theologian that she had experienced an encounter with St. Ignatius on Christmas Eve while walking up a steep street.

While moved to find out more about Adrienne von Speyr, I went to a few online websites. It was recommended to start with the *Handmaid of the Lord*. I am going to start with *First Glance at Adrienne von Speyr* written by Hans Urs von Balthasar about Adrienne von Speyr. Hopefully, this will be a New Year’s Resolution filled with theological insights, mystical experiences and Marian spirituality and shaping my faith on a deeper level.

Today is the feast of St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church. The deceit of the day for these two great men was refuting the teaching of Arius concerning the controversy over the divinity of Jesus. Just as John the Baptist lived and breathed the truth of Christ, so did St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen. That is my prayer for all of us. St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory Nazianzen and St. John the Baptist, Pray for us!

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