Faith and reason: a synthesis

Saint Macarius the Great and Saint Ferdinand III of Castile: holiness of the heart and holiness in government

ECCEKENOO · SPIRITUAL FORMATION

True authority is born of a heart that God has transformed, and it shows itself in service to the common good. Saint Macarius the Great and Saint Ferdinand III show that inner holiness and the just exercise of government are complementary paths, and that both make the Kingdom of God visible in the person and in society.

"As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him: Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that nursed you. But he said: Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11:27–28).

- Saint Macarius the Great: contemplative holiness (faith).
- Saint Ferdinand III of Castile: holiness in government (reason).
- Where they meet: the human being as the image of God. The dignity of the person comes from God and can never be treated as an object.

I. The central aim: the dignity of the person

Saint Macarius

Transformation from within the heart, where God dwells in all his children.

Saint Ferdinand III

He sees each person through their mission in society: every person must be protected and governed with justice, because every person belongs to God.

Together they show two complementary roads to holiness, the contemplative life and the holy exercise of government, and that both vocations rest on union with God and on service to the human being.

II. Authority

Saint Macarius

True authority is born of holiness: whoever masters his own heart in humility can help his neighbor.

Saint Ferdinand III

Authority is a service received from God. The king does not govern to exalt himself but as the steward of God's Kingdom on earth; for him, power is legitimate only when it serves justice and the weakest.

True authority is born of holiness and humility and is exercised as faithful service to God and neighbor. Its power is legitimate when it seeks justice and protects the weakest above all.

III. Mercy

Saint Macarius

He understands mercy as the fruit of a heart transformed by the Spirit.

Saint Ferdinand III

He expresses it in concrete decisions: protecting the poor, respecting the defeated where he could, building peace after conflict, and administering justice without arbitrariness.

What is contemplation in the one becomes just government in the other.

IV. The spiritual battle

Saint Macarius

He places the battle chiefly within, where the enemies are the passions, pride and sin.

Saint Ferdinand III

He knows that inner battle, and he also faces a battle in history: ruling a kingdom, administering justice and making hard decisions. His challenge is to keep those duties from extinguishing his life of prayer.

The theological vision of the human person is a sharing in divine life through grace: we are called to live according to the order God wills, where justice, peace and charity allow each person to reach their vocation with dignity.

V. Two ways of understanding authority

Saint Macarius

True authority is born of personal holiness. Mastery of self comes before the spiritual accompaniment of others, and authority is exercised through humility, example and service.

Saint Ferdinand III

Power is a mission entrusted by God. The ruler administers authority and does not own it, and the legitimacy of power depends on its orientation towards justice, the common good and the protection of the most vulnerable.

Saint Macarius teaches that true authority is born of holiness, humility and self-mastery. Saint Ferdinand III shows that power is a mission entrusted by God, to be exercised with justice, in service of the common good and of those most in need.

Synthesis

Saint Macarius teaches that the Kingdom of God begins when the Holy Spirit transforms the heart. Saint Ferdinand III teaches that the same Kingdom must also show itself in society, through justice, service and the responsible exercise of authority. In both, union with God becomes visible in concrete love for the human person.

Authentic contemplation does not end in inner experience: it becomes a life that transforms human relationships and structures according to the Gospel. Saint Macarius offers a mysticism of the heart; Saint Ferdinand III embodies a mysticism of government and service, in which power becomes an expression of charity and of justice inspired by God.

A recreation, in Eccekenoo's format, of the original four-page synthesis in Spanish; the scripture is rendered from the author's Spanish.