

St. Therese Adult Study Series
The Religion of the Day with Father Andrie

Reflection Questions for Chapter 2 Sections 1-6

For the next session on February 20th, please read Chapter 2, pages 21-31 (#1-6) in *The Religion of the Day* book. Begin with this or another prayer of your choice: *“Loving God, Throughout the day today, help me to look at things a little differently. Yes, there will be violence in the world; Help me to focus on being more gentle. The weather will bring hardship to many; Help me to accomplish what I need to do without complaint. The poor and homeless will remain; Help me to make room in my heart for anyone I have shunned. People will suffer misfortune today; Help me to notice blessings I sometimes take for granted. I may find myself feeling pretty good or feeling downcast today; Help me to look to You with greater faith, no matter what. Amen.”* <https://www.heartofthenation.org/daily-prayers> Your reflections will be shared **February 20th** in your small group. Your group may not get to all the questions. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you to those questions most important for your group.

1. “Gnostic beliefs closely resemble orthodox Christian beliefs in structure, but not in content. Gnostics believe in one supreme God who created the world through multiple processes of emanation (originate), which eventually led to the creation of a flawed lesser God who created the flawed material world.” (definition from study.com) **How do you see this mystical knowledge play out in the world today?**

2. The Human Tragedy of Alienation. Discuss your thoughts on this quote from page 22,” ...human life is coterminous (same boundaries or extent in space, time, or meaning) with the natural world and that the point of religion is to help humans find their proper place in the cycle of living and dying.”

3. Salvation is Possible. How do you feel about the” promise of freedom from personal alienation and the perfection of human society, not in some distant future state but in the world as it now exists?” Why would this be such a draw for young, enthusiastic minds?

4. The Transformation of Our Humanity. Did your view of "freedom" change after reading this section? Are limits healthy?

5. The Source of Alienation Not Within Us. The word "Pride" has changed in meaning many times. Originally in Old English, pride was not something to be proud of. It carried the meaning of "inordinate self-esteem" and "an unreasonable conceit of superiority." In its early use, pride was also often capitalized, denoting one of the seven deadly sins. The self-respect form didn't appear until the 14th century. Where do you see "pride" when looking at the world as the problem instead of looking within ourselves?

How was Jesus the perfect example for us who "did not count the greatness of his being, something to be grasped?" (pg. 26)

7. Tragic Hostility to God. How does this hostility of God and the lack of focus that we have been wonderfully made in the image and likeness of a loving God make you feel? Do you feel that religion and science support each other? Give some details.

7. A High but Ambiguous Moral Call. Here they see the Gospel message shift from sin and redemption to social justice. When it is evident that "poverty, disease, and old age cannot be entirely conquered," elimination works its way into the story. (pg. 31) How would you, thinking like Jesus would, caution someone on this viewpoint?

What else stood out for you in this chapter?