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## *Defibrillation: Resetting Our Lives*

An article from the *Cathedral Times*  
By the Rev. Deacon Juan Sandoval

I worked in hospitals for many years as a registered nurse. My area of expertise was in critical care, where we cared for those whose life often hung in the balance from intense surgery or debilitating disease processes. Throughout the hospital one could find AEDs, or automatic external defibrillators. The defibrillator is used when a patient might have an irregular heart beat or a dangerous heart beat. The defibrillator is a mechanism that delivers electricity to the electrical system of the heart and actually stops the heart and allows it to reset into a “normal” rhythm or pattern.

Sometimes our spiritual lives are in need of a defibrillation of the soul, a defibrillator of our heart to reset the “arrhythmia” of our lives, to reset our hearts to the rhythm of God, which is love. The love that Jesus talks to us about, the love that Jesus asks Peter about, “Peter, do you love me?” not just once, but three times. The Love that Jesus leaves us all with the Great Commandment: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.” And don’t forget to Love yourself.

Perhaps what we need is a revival, a revival of relationships. We are in a situation today that folks in the South might call a “mess.” Our heart has an arrhythmia and it needs to be reset. The essence of God is a community of love. How do we get back into normalcy from our fractured relationships? Perhaps loving creation, which continues to this day, love yourself, love your neighbor and most of all, love your God!

Martin Luther King told us that we must learn to live together or perish as fools. Yes, we need a defibrillation of our hearts. We need to reset our love for our church and for our neighbors across the globe. Each of us can be that small spark of electricity and be that advocate for humanity. Yes, each of us can be a defibrillator to help in resetting this world to Love.

Last October, I went on a pilgrimage to Avila in Spain. There I studied and traveled in the footsteps of one of the great mystics of Spain, San Juan de la Cruz or Saint John of the Cross. His works, like a defibrillator, reset his life and that of others at various stages of his increasing maturity. For John, God was not some abstract divinity, but rather a triune God - the One who speaks the Word both in history and in eternity.

The works of St. John of the Cross touched my soul. His poetry struck and enlightened me. His writings include the *Spiritual Canticle* (written in almost total darkness in prison), *Dark Night*, *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *The Living Flame of Love* (which he never completed because he could not find the words to express his sublime experience). All of his writings get closer to God. His writings can also act as a defibrillator in resetting self. These are some lines from *The Living Flame of Love*:

The flame of love bathes the soul in glory  
The flame of love dissolves the soul in love  
The flame of love give the soul eternal life

What a person knows and experiences of God in this awakening is entirely beyond words. Since this awakening is the communication of God's excellence to the substance of the soul.

Defibrillators come in many forms, but all have one purpose and that is to reset. Is there one in your spiritual life that may reset the arrhythmia of your heart and soul to the rhythm of God? That may reset you to the love of God? May your search be fruitful.

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