

Summary Reflection

The class reading that was the most meaningful to me was the selected readings from Mother Theresa. Before reading these selections, I had never read or learned about who Mother Theresa was and what she stood for. I liked the message and the principles that she wrote about in her writing, such as showing kindness and generosity to the poor and needy or achieving true silence in order to live a better life. This reading also taught me about the Christian practice of seeking the face of God in everything, everyone, everywhere at all times. Mother Theresa's message of helping those around you and spreading love and kindness in the world was a message that resonated with me.

Our class discussion on asceticism changed my thinking on the meaning of freedom and how discipline can set you free. I learned that asceticism is a minimalist lifestyle in which there is a denial of worldly pleasures in order to focus time and energy on worshipping God. Asceticism provides a different lens through which to look at what freedom is. Before this discussion, I would have defined freedom as the ability to do anything that you want to do. However, this kind of freedom allows for the opportunity to become a slave to your desires. On the other hand, ascetics achieve freedom through discipline and strict adherence to rules and restrictions. By removing the temptation and enslavement of personal pleasure and desire, true freedom can be achieved to do what is right and necessary for a fulfilling life. This discussion made me consider ways that I can change my behavior to become more disciplined and develop more freedom in my life.

Something that has surprised me has been how involved Christianity has been in political and social contexts. For example, Christianity was very prominent during the Civil Rights Movement, as shown in "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King Jr. In this

situation, Christianity was prominent during the Civil Rights Movement although the movement was not specifically religious in nature or origin. However, this showed me that religion can be applied and expressed in many forms and in many different contexts. Christianity is also heavily involved when discussing philosophy. A classic example of this is the problem of evil that has been a prominent point of interest in Christian philosophy. There have been a wide variety of voices and opinions from both secular and religious perspectives on the problem of evil. The large amount of writing and research that has been done on the problem of evil stuck with me as I learned about it during class. Our class discussion on the problem of evil has made me more interested in the question "Why did God create atheists or allow people to become atheist knowing that atheists will not go to Heaven?" I want to learn more about how Christianity applies to philosophical questions or abstract conversations on society and humans in order to examine the world from a different perspective.

My initial expectations of the device free practices were that I wouldn't get much out of the device free sessions. I thought that it would be a small pause during my day before I go back to being on my devices. What I experienced was a period of mindfulness and introspection during these device free sessions. During the time I wasn't on my devices, I took that time to think more deeply about issues or problems in my life and how to best address them. The device free sessions also gave me the opportunity to appreciate and experience the world around me without distraction. I was able to be fully present in my environment and live in the moment which allowed me to clear my head and relax. I would absolutely recommend the device free sessions to other people.

If I had to change the course, I would provide more opportunities to do group projects or discussions. I would also have students do research on class topics and either write short descriptions of what they've learned or give presentations on their topic.