



Three Great Forces, by Brother David Steindl-Rast

The three great forces that the Christian Elders in the Egyptian desert identified as the enemies against which weâ€™re battling are anger, lust, and laziness. The third one is called the noonday devil. It is in the middle of everything â€“ of a day, of a life â€“ that you can lose your resolve, that torpor can set in. When youâ€™re in the middle of swimming across a river, itâ€™s too far to go back and seems too far to reach the other side, and you are tempted to give up. Well, these three elementsâ€“anger, lust, and lazinessâ€“are precisely the three ways that we can fail to be present where we are, and the whole idea of getting yourself together is to be present where you are and, in the Christian context, to respond to the presence of God.

Anger really means impatience (as opposed to the righteous anger that is desirable in many circumstances). Impatience makes us get ahead of ourselves, reaching out for something in the future and not really being content with where we are, here and now.

Lust extends much wider than the sexual sphere, and essentially means attachment to something that is not present, or is not the appropriate thing right now.

And one by-product of laziness, of being victimized by the noonday devil, is sadness -- not the genuine sorrow of compassion, but the lifeless ennui of never really being involved in the present, with whatâ€™s happening.

Itâ€™s all about struggling with the forces that are all around us in the world and within us and that distract us from being really unified, in one piece.

--Brother David Steindl-Rast