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## **1.3. Outer and Inner Dimension of the Life of Faith**

Father Bernhard, a \*Cistercian monk and priest, says the following:

Theology and the sacraments are like an outer shell that already reveals something of the inner core. The inner core is the mystical experience with God. The shell points to the core, but we cannot "eat" the shell.

Our life of faith includes actions such as studying holy scriptures, attending faith events, performing rituals, saying prayers, and engaging in religiously motivated activities for the benefit of others.

We refer to this as a religious lifestyle.

**All these actions have both an outer and an inner dimension.**

Father Bernhard illustrates this with the metaphor of a shell and a core:

**The outer can lead us to the inner, but the inner is the direct access to God.**

Often religious people are satisfied with the shell and stop seeking the core. Occasionally, they have indirect experiences with God, for example through answers to prayer: We pray, and something happens that we interpret as God's response.

**The direct experience, on the other hand, is the mystical experience with God.**

Here, we experience His presence and love directly within us.

Mysticism is the real experience of the spiritual reality of the living God.

The mystical path is an inner journey on which we directly experience God and become one with Him.

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