

**FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK**

Dear Parishioners,

One of the excesses in our culture is our focus on our feelings and emotions. It is excessive at times because often our emotions are regarded as being infallible. For example, sometimes we get upset because we feel that someone has been unkind to us. If we allow our emotions free rein, we can get quite worked up about the matter. Then, when we discuss the matter with the other person, we discover that we misunderstood what they said and that our hurt feelings had no basis in reality. So our feelings are not infallible. That being said, being aware of our emotions and where they are coming from is important to our spiritual lives as the essay below points out.

With my prayers,  
Fr. Conley

**The Integration of Emotions and Spirituality**

by Ellen Mady *Mind & Spirit Magazine*

As Christians, we're often (and rightly) told of the importance of spiritual development and maturity, of fostering prayer, piety and other spiritual practices. However, rarely have I heard spiritual leaders address the importance of *emotional* maturity in our spiritual lives. Yet I would argue that in order to be *spiritually mature* we must also be *emotionally mature*. Let me explain.

Over the past several decades, as fields related to psychology and mental health have helped us develop a much more solid understanding of how our emotions work and why they are important, a degree of collaboration between faith and psychology has become common. There is a stronger general awareness that faith alone does not solve all human struggles, and that professional support from counselors and therapists is also important. Some faith communities have lists of local counselors they refer people too, and a few even have a counselor or therapist on staff...

I have found healing, beauty and truth through my faith. I have also found healing, beauty and truth through developing a strong understanding of my human nature, particularly of my emotions. My strongest experiences of healing, beauty and truth began the moment I, as an individual, started discovering how to integrate my approach to faith and spirituality with my emotional intelligence and maturity...

This intersection of my emotions and my spiritual life led to a fuller experience of what it means to be truly human, and the awareness that I am not only capable of bringing my entire self, whole and integrated, to all dimensions of my life, but that this is actually God's plan for me.

We have been created for union with God: our spiritual life is important. We have been created in the image and likeness of God: our emotions are part of this reality, willed by God to help us be more fully present to

ourselves, to the world around us, and to him. Our spirituality, our emotionality, our reason, and our will do not operate to their fullest extent in isolation, but when working together.

The idea that we can isolate our own faith and spiritual life from our human emotions and instincts is a philosophical fiction. There is no moment, as human persons, in which we are *only* thinking, or operating in the intellectual sphere, any more than there is a moment in which we are *only* feeling. Reason alone has no way of knowing or perceiving reality. It is presented with valuable information through our physical senses. Our emotions present it with valuable information as well, regarding non-physical, but no less real dimensions of what is going on both inside us and around us.

Our emotions are also a way God can communicate with us from within. We believe that we are temples of the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Trinity dwells within us. If our emotions are able to put us more fully in touch with the core of our being, it makes sense that, in so doing, they are able to connect us more deeply with the God who dwells in us.

St. Ignatius of Loyola pioneered the integration of emotions and spirituality in the 1500s. He found that identifying and listening to our deepest feelings plays a key role in discovering God's presence in our life and discerning life choices. Ignatius' rules of discernment are nuanced to acknowledge the different ways good and evil work in the lives of people at different places in their own spiritual life, but the essential principle guiding his rules is that if we are able to be in touch with and rightly understand our feelings, they will provide us with needed insight into what aspects of our life are drawing us closer to God and what aspects are pulling us away from him. Over time, by fine tuning our ability to feel and understand our emotions, we can become increasing more adept and sensitive to the ways God reveals himself to us in daily life.

How can we bring about an integration of emotion and spirituality in our own life? One way is to start by just being more aware of your emotions and letting yourself truly feel them. This means focusing on 1) how you are feeling 2) why you are feeling that way and 3) what your feelings are telling you about yourself, or about your perception of another person or situation. This is a simple way of becoming more in tune with your emotions, which can bring great insight...

There is also a strong connection between emotions and virtue. Emotions are neither good nor bad in themselves, but our response to them can take on a moral character. Emotions can become a significant source of positive motivation that encourages virtuous behavior. Wonder and awe before nature and other aspects of life can lead us to a greater sense of reverence for the God who created all. Dignity and a sense of repulsion at injustice can culminate in virtues of charity

and mercy. Emotions of gratitude, satisfaction, fulfillment and peace can bring us to a greater awareness of God's presence and action in our lives.

We are each unique, and God is infinite: the ways in which we can experience him, not only through creation, through the world and through the Church, but also through his presence within us and the nature he has given us are endless, and well worth discovering over and over again.

**RETREAT DAY ON DIVINE HEALING ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6 FROM 9:30A.M. TO 3:30 P.M.** The day will focus on Healing Prayer with presentations on praying for physical and inner healing. The retreat day will conclude with the evening Mass and opportunities to receive Prayer for healing and the Sacrament of Anointing. You can register at [www.eventbrite.com/e/healing-prayer-retreat-tickets-49560541915](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/healing-prayer-retreat-tickets-49560541915)

**PRAISE THE LORD ALWAYS!** We will have a praise and worship gathering this Thursday from 6:30 to 8:30 and dinner will be served. Everyone is invited to come and join us for Spirit-filled praise of our Lord. For more information contact Fr. Conley at [frconley@comcast.net](mailto:frconley@comcast.net)

**THIS FRIDAY IS FIRST FRIDAY AND WE WILL HAVE EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT following the 9:30 Mass until 6pm.**

Volunteers are needed to sign up for adoration times from 3 to 6pm. The sign-up sheet is in the foyer. Come and pray in the presence of the Lord in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

**“FOLLOWING JESUS: PRIEST, PROPHET AND KING” CONTINUES.** *You can still join us!* Our **Thursday** classes are on October 11 and 25, November 8 and 29, and December 13. The Sunday sessions are on September 30, October 14 & 28 and November 11 and 25. This DVD series will be presented by Bishop Robert Barron. He is a very popular speaker and has many presentations on YouTube.

The cost is just \$10 for the series to defray some of the food costs. You may sign up in the foyer or by contacting Fr Conley at [frconley@comcast.net](mailto:frconley@comcast.net)

**TEXAS ROADHOUSE AND ST. MARY'S ARE WORKING TOGETHER.** Starting today, **Sept 30<sup>th</sup>** and every **Sunday** thereafter, present our Bulletin while dining at the Texas Roadhouse in La Plata, and they will donate 10% of the proceeds from your check to St. Mary's. **“Excludes alcohol, tax and gratuity”.** To celebrate this new venture, Texas Roadhouse will be here, on the 30<sup>th</sup> distributing free samples of their delicious bread following the 10 a.m. Mass.

**HAVE YOU BEEN ASKED TO BE A GODPARENT OR SPONSOR?** If so, **congratulations!** It is a great honor because you have been asked to help someone else to grow in faith as a Catholic. To assist those of you who are asked to be godparents or sponsors we have a two-class course called **"Preparing for the Sacraments for Parents and Sponsors."** The free course is required for our parishioners who need a recommendation in order to be godparents or sponsors at other parishes. It will provide a good overview of our Catholic faith. The classes for October are October 3 and 17 from 7- 9pm. The classes will meet on the first and third Wednesday of each month. For more information contact Fr. Conley.

**ST. MARY'S SCHOOL IS HAVING THEIR ANNUAL \$60,000 RAFFLE STARTING SOON.** You may purchase a ticket on your own for \$100 or consider purchasing a ticket with your friends, family or co-workers. Split the ticket cost and the winnings. There are 20 opportunities to win cash prizes adding up to \$60,000. Your ticket enters you in all 20 drawings. Our first drawing for \$1,000 will be held on October 19<sup>th</sup> at the school's Annual Fall Festival. The Grand Prize Drawing of \$20,000 will be held on March 1, 2019.

**MORNING MASS THIS SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, WILL BE AT 8:00AM AND CONFESSIONS AT 8:30AM.**

**MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK:**

**SUN:** 8am Parishioners, 10am Larry Wood,  
**12N:** Janet Joy Brillantes, **MON:** 8am Joseph L. Jones,  
**TUES:** 8am Maurice Long, Sr., **WED:** 8am Paul Istvan,  
**THURS:** 8am Anna V. Garity, **FRI:** 9:30am John Frere, **SAT:** 9am William Fraser, 4pm Lisa Ann O'Neill.

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY**

**PRAYERS:** Stephen Balenger, Mary Bowes, Deacon Gene Burroughs, Brenda Callahan, Frances Card, Joe Cross, Agnes Curtis, Chuck Davis, Susan Welch Day, Kendall Farrell, George Fassel, Keith Van Gadson, Arlene Gandolfi, Martha Gehring, James Gibson, Zynae Green, Judy Istvan-Windsor, Irma Johnson, Elaine Jones, Regina Kijesky, Marie Knobel, Lillian Komar, Susie Logan, Jim Middleton, Mary Emma Middleton, Larry Miller, Joseph Mona, Wayne Mullings, Ryan Myers, Joseph Quade, Mary Reeves, Sylvene Savoy, William Leon Savoy, Edna Sweeney, Eva Washington, Beth Weise, Pat Werner, Gary Williams, Brice Zimmer.

**OFFERTORY COLLECTION LAST WEEKEND:** \$9,000.25. The unidentified donations totaled \$499.25.