

March 31, 2019 – Fifth Sunday of Lent

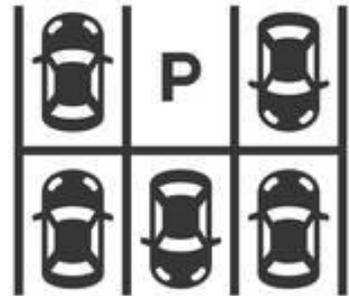
*MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED
NOW AND FOREVER!!!*

SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS

Parking Lot Parents V

Sr. Patricia McCormack IHM in her book: *Engaging Parking Lot Parents: a Catechist's Guide to Fostering Parents Participation* provides many interesting insights into how we can re-engage fallen away Catholics and at the same time prevent our Church from losing the next generation. Insights from her book will be in bold and my thoughts will be in the normal font.

Sister Patricia in her book quotes another book written by Todd Whitaker called **Dealing with Difficult Parents**. Todd Whitaker proposes A+ behaviors as a guide to help catechists deal with teachers. I think though that we can use these six behaviors to deal with any difficult person in our life.



6 A+ Behaviors

- 1. Appreciate the parent for bringing an issue directly to your attention.** Verbalize how you welcome his/her input and that you respect him/her for speaking directly to you rather than speaking passively through the gossip meal.
- 2. Affirm the parent for presenting the issue.** Speak in a rational, understanding manner devoid of emotional tones or the “he said/she said” accusation-style of communication.
- 3. Acknowledge the parent’s feelings.** Don’t downplay or argue with parents over the perception, but try to listen to what needs underlie their emotion.
- 4. Avoid becoming defensiveness.** The moment you feel the urge to justify an action or justify your position to protect yourself, or to guard or to secure your program the ego emerges. One ego takes over, the issue is no longer about the student or parent: it becomes about you!
- 5. Assume positive intentions and motivation on the part of the parent.** Give the benefit of the doubt to parent behavior or lack of involvement. Trust that parents intend the best for their children and that if an event does not turn out well it is due to insufficient knowledge or weak human nature and not lack of desire.
- 6. Admit wrongdoing or guilt.** Be secure enough to apologize. Or even, if you are not at fault, be humble enough to say something like, “I regret that this issue has been so stressful.” Or, “I can explain why I made the decision but it does not excuse the hurt that resulted

Take the “high road.” Never raise your voice, use sarcasm, argue, or treat a parent rudely. Avoid power struggles. Do not let angry or self-righteous emotions dictate your behavior. You may not be able to control your feelings, but it is essential that you control your actions. Think “imaginary audience!” When you speak with a parent imagine that others can observe you and hear you. Conduct yourself accordingly.

In the seminary, one of the teachers encouraged us to always pretend that our mother was in the room with us and that we just did not see her and so therefore we should never do anything our imaginary mother would disapprove of. I always thought that was good idea.

I also remember Dr. Gottman's (a relationship expert) words warning that while I might have a right to be defensive, that defensiveness normally does not end the argument but elevates it to the next level. Dr. Gottmann also points out in his writings: *Statistics tell the story: 96 percent of the time you can predict the outcome of a conversation based on the first three minutes of the fifteen-minute interaction! A harsh startup simply dooms you to failure. So if you begin a discussion that way, you might as well pull the plug, take a breather, and start over.* He also went on to write: *research shows that this approach rarely has the desired effect. The attacking spouse does not back down or apologize. This is because defensiveness is really a way of blaming your partner. You're saying, in effect, "The problem isn't me, it's you." Defensiveness just escalates the conflict, which is why it's so deadly*

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Sunday

I am the prodigal son every time I search for unconditional love where it cannot be found. - Henri Nouwen

Monday

Intercessory prayer is the purifying bath into which the individual and the community must enter every day. - Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Tuesday

Though we are incomplete, God loves us completely. Though we are imperfect, He loves us perfectly. Though we may feel lost and without compass, God's love encompasses us completely. ... He loves every one of us, even those who are flawed, rejected, awkward, sorrowful, or broken. - Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Wednesday

On the whole, God's love for us is a much safer subject to think about than our love for Him. - C. S. Lewis

Thursday

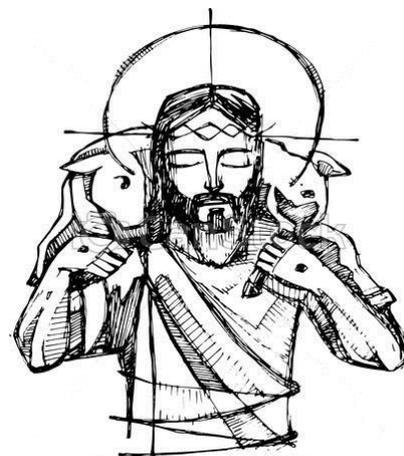
Clericalism – Wanting others to be holy so I don't have too.

Friday

We don't always know one's past

Saturday

When you shut down dialogue partners then you know you are not on solid ground like you think you are.



BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

March 31 2019 - Fourth Sunday of Lent – Year C Readings Lectionary: 33 Gospel LK 15:1-3, 11-32

Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So to them Jesus addressed this parable: "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a

severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers."' So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began. Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, 'Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.' He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'"

Spiritual Reflection: Spiritual Writer Henri Nouwen wrote: "I am the prodigal son every time I search for unconditional love where it cannot be found."

Spiritual Questions:

1. Where do you look for unconditional love?
2. How does violence relate to a search for unconditional love?
3. How can your love become more unconditional?
4. Where can unconditional love be found?
5. Tell about a time when you thought someone would love you unconditionally and didn't?

 **PRO-LIFE** 

A Prayer For Personal Conversion

O gracious Master, infuse in our hearts the spotless light of Your Divine Wisdom and open the eyes of our mind that we may understand the teachings of Your Gospel. Instill in us also the fear of Your blessed commandments, so that having curbed all selfish desires, we may lead a life that promotes the dignity of each human person. May everything, I do and think become pleasing to you., or You, O Christ, our God, are the enlightenment of our souls and bodies; and to You we render glory, together with Your eternal Father, and with Your all holy, life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and forever.

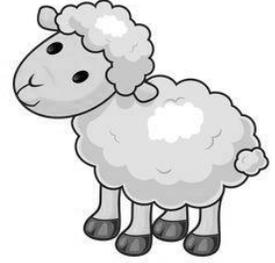


St. Monica Society

Please join us in praying a special prayer each month for Catholics who have fallen away from their faith.

PRAYER FOR FALLEN AWAY CATHOLICS DURING LENT

God of times and seasons, you have brought us again to Lent for the study of Your Word, for the remembrance of the temptation of Your Son, and for the contemplation of His Cross. The birds know their seasons; forbid that we be blind to our times. Grant us a Lenten blessing upon us and upon our brothers and sisters who have fallen away from the true faith so that no one will miss this time of growth and repentance. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



CATHOLIC PRAYER:

SAINT JOSEPH # 1



Glorious Saint Joseph, foster-father and protector of Jesus Christ, to you I raise my heart and my hands to implore your powerful intercession. Please obtain for me from the kind Heart of Jesus the help and the graces necessary for my spiritual and temporal welfare. I ask particularly for the grace of a happy death and the special favor I now implore.

(Make your petition here...)

Guardian of the Word Incarnate, I feel animated with confidence that your prayers in my behalf will be graciously heard before the throne of God. O glorious Saint Joseph, through the love you bear to Jesus Christ, and for the glory of His name, hear my prayers and obtain my petitions.

SAINT JOSEPH #2

Glorious Saint Joseph, pattern of all who are devoted to toil, obtain for me the grace to toil in the spirit of penance, in order thereby to atone for my many sins; to toil conscientiously, putting devotion to duty before my own inclinations; to labor with thankfulness and joy, deeming it an honor to employ and to develop, by my labor, the gifts that I have received from Almighty God; to work with order, peace, moderation, and patience, without ever shrinking from weariness and difficulties; to work above all with a pure intention and with detachment from self, having always before my eyes the hour of death and the accounting which I must then render of time ill-spent, of talents unemployed, of good undone, and of my empty pride in success, which is so fatal to the work of God. All for Jesus, all through Mary, all in imitation of thee, O Patriarch Joseph! This shall be my motto in life and in death. Amen.



"If telemarketers call, invite them to church."



"Sounds like you made a pretty good trade."

