

An Exploration of Forgiveness - Lent 2015

Let me begin by saying that it is essential to understand that forgiveness is central to the teaching and practice of Jesus. It is equally important to know that his understanding of forgiveness is in many important ways quite radical because of its depth and power to transform. So this season of Lent is a special time to explore the wonder of this forgiveness Jesus taught and our own experience of it...in our receiving and our giving of it!

fr. Ray
Lent 2015

Week 1: Our goal this Sunday is to simply state the problem and to invite your reflection and the beginning of a thoughtful conversation! We do so in the hope that our deepening understanding of forgiveness will lead each of us to living the life Jesus envisioned was waiting for each of us!

It is not possible to do this without first taking a careful look at our experience of sin and the impact it has. Let's look at sin from the perspective of it being essentially a lie that has complicated and destructive consequences. Perhaps the essence of that lie is that it says I'm somehow lacking, less than, deficient, empty...and all the other words that describe the "want" that then takes control of our lives; compromises our ability to make decisions; makes us takers rather than letting our lives blossom in generosity. With each sin our vision has somehow been narrowed both in regard to oneself, the moment one is facing or the person one is interacting with and even God. It would not be unfair to say that sin as much as it is a lie is also a blindness.

We have to be careful to not think that because we use the word sin less frequently or maybe even dismiss it that the experience we use the word to define isn't a real and powerful part of our world and our own personal experience.

This first week I would invite each of us to take a serious and thoughtful look at our own lived "experience" of sin.

This week's Conversation now begins:

These are the words/phrases that come to mind when I hear or think about the word "sin":

These are the feelings that come to my heart when I hear or think about the word "sin":

The question about sin that I struggle with most deeply is:

Please tear off your responses and simply put them in the offertory basket...no names please! I will carefully read your responses and use them to guide our continued exploration throughout Lent.

We will continue this reflection and conversation throughout the season of Lent with the hope that in our sustained shared conversation something will shift for each of us...life will open up before us in a way and manner that Jesus was passionate about.