

Institute Voluntas Dei – April 2018 Lesson Plan

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Is It Possible to Get Along with Others? – To Live is to Trust, Human Relations Exact a Price (pgs. 62-75)

Opening Prayer

Through the day

As the sun scatters the mist
at the dawning of a new day,
So you calm our fears and anxieties
if we trust you.
You give us strength and courage
to live our daily lives
knowing you are with us
and we do not walk alone.
As the midday sun warms us,
we feel your protecting arms around us
and sense your loving presence.
As the sun sinks in a kaleidoscope of color
you give us hope and renewal. – Jenny Child

As I read and reflect on this month's lesson, themes that kept presenting to me are, contemplative listening, non- judgement, non-violent communication and the importance of ongoing psychological and spiritual growth in one's life. Without these elements, it will not be possible to get along with others. It will not be possible to live in trust. Unless we are truly in touch with our deepest feelings and sense of self-worth, it will be very difficult to recognize in others their own unique giftedness and self-worth.

Our daily interactions with people in our lives can, at times be like an obstacle course where much patience, listening and understanding is called for. Clearly, all of these are easier said than done. Cultivating a deep contemplative awareness and disposition helps us navigate such obstacle courses.

To Live is to Trust. This can be very difficult and challenging, particularly, if one has been betrayed or violated. We are all wounded warriors with our own life experiences and stories to tell. And still, not to trust, is not to live and love.

Fr. Parent states, "When, overcome by an indefinable fear, I do not place my trust in others, I employ a technique of control by which I exert the influence of intelligence and will to dominate others...Page 62

Reflection and Sharing

- What happens in me when I cannot trust those around me? What happens in me when I don't feel trusted? What do I do? How do I feel? What do I tend to say? I am sure there are all kinds of responses to these scenarios.

Fr. Parent continues, ... *“To establish human relationships which are agreeable, long lasting and profound, I must believe in others... To believe in others is to allow them to reach down to the bottom of the heart where there will be neither aggressiveness, nor jealousy, doubt or fear... To believe in others is to be mindful of them, to accept them, to keep them company just for what they are...”* pages. 65 -66.

Reflection and Sharing

- Believe in and trust yourself? Trust others? Trust God? What does this mean in terms of celebrating my own unique giftedness and identity as well as that of others and how this may impact my relationship with God, others, Voluntas Dei and our world?

No person is an island. We are all called into community, into relationship. We all need each other. The psychological needs of love, acceptance and acknowledgement are essential for healthy spiritual and emotional well-being. We should never underestimate the words we use with others in terms of their value in spiritual and psychological growth. Yes, we can be optimistic, even in the midst of betrayal and hurt to trust and love again. As Fr. Parent reminds us, God has implanted deep within each one of us qualities of strength, of love, of understanding, of trust. I must take responsibility to live out these values, to use them in the service of others.

Reflection and Sharing

- How does a spirituality of the three fives inform and guide me in living out of a place of love, trust and service to others?

Conclusion

“Trust is the basis of life. Without trust, no human being can live. Trapeze artists offer a beautiful image of this. Flyers have to trust their catchers. They can do the most spectacular doubles, triples, or quadruples, but what finally makes their performance spectacular are the catchers who are there for them at the right time in the right place.

Much of our lives is flying. It is wonderful to fly in the air free as a bird, but when God isn't there to catch us, all our flying comes to nothing. Let's trust in the Great Catcher.” -Henri Nouwen