

WHO AM I TO JUDGE?

SESSION 5: ENGAGING MORAL RELATIVISM

Dr. Sri introduced two of the 7 Keys to engage our relativistic friends so they may consider the virtue-oriented classic moral view. Firstly, Rather than confrontation, leading into heartfelt connection with others means embracing them with mercy. Pope Francis notes that "Relativism deeply wounds people" as the dictate of short term gratification supplants long term care of self and others. For example, how many families are devastated when one spouse determines the other no longer meets his/her needs, thus ending the marital relationship? Superficially, the relativistic person may seem happily fulfilled in life, but inside throbs pain of past mistakes, sins committed, and relationship injuries inflicted upon and by others. Similarly, just as the child who knows he is allergic to dogs and still decides to joyfully wrestle with the lively bundle of fur only causes the onset of a horrible reaction; do we initially ask him in the midst of his inability to breathe, why he did that?

Likewise, God wants to heal us, pardon us, and CHANGE our hearts to overcome our deep hurts. Areas of addiction such as substance abuse or pornography already have caused people a lack of control in fighting the problem. How does it help the suffering person to overcome their feelings of failure by simply labeling the problems as "mortal sin?" Instead, embracing God's encouragement of how He NEVER gives up on us slowly can change our hearts through His grace through definitive steps to affirm our consistent efforts to overcome such damaging sin. "Jesus never compromised His conviction to be compassionate," and He always led through forgiveness and healing (Study Guide).

The second key to engaging relativism involves contrasting the two very different worldviews of Christianity and Relativism. Christianity believes life is a story, and all the characters develop virtues to thrive through the difficult plot to become heroes. Our choices impact us and others, as we either draw closer to the purpose (telos) of whom we are meant to be, or lead us further away from that role. In essence, people are

affected by us for better or worse. In giving the gift of ourselves to others, we find our happiness. Relativistic beliefs take people down the wrong path, as life has no plot, and other people are seen as separate from oneself. The relativist needs to detach self from others to find one self, and to overcome others to gain what one wants. In the relativistic view, what suffers most is relationships, as each chooses for oneself, there is no road map on how to be, so the focus is upon "being oneself".

Atheist Friedrich Nietzsche dryly claimed that the best way to attack Christianity is not to argue its claims of the truth; but to frame its moral way of life as repressive, harmful, disgusting, repressive, and incapable of bringing happiness. Alternatively, Pope Benedict XVI claimed that those who abandoned the moral truth of Christianity for relativity find it unconvincing and empty, as what we do matters, and our choices impact others. "Today it is a matter of the greatest urgency to show a Christian model of life that offers a livable alternative to the increasingly vacuous entertainments of leisure-time society."*

*Joseph Ratzinger and Mercello Pera, *Without Roots: The West, Relativism, Christianity, Islam*, trans. Michael F. Moore. (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 125.

Extra Notes on Virtues

Father Paul Check asserted that Jesus lived an intensely happy and fulfilled human life, since He acquired all 10 sacramental virtues from completely living the 10 Commandments. In embracing the 10 Commandments, His and our human hearts embrace joy. The 1st Commandment virtue is fidelity; the 2nd Commandment virtue is reverence for others; the 3rd Commandment virtue is service/worship; the 4th Commandment virtue is piety/reverence; the 5th Commandment virtue is meekness; the 6th Commandment virtue is chastity; the 7th Commandment virtue is justice; the 8th Commandment virtue is truthfulness; the 9th Commandment virtue is purity of heart; and the 10th Commandment virtue is temperance. As Jesus so adeptly demonstrates to us, virtues make His life successful in relationships as He forgives and heals us.

HOW CAN EVERY CATHOLIC MAKE LENT A TIME OF PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT?

We can attend weekday Mass. We can reflect on the Creed, taking each statement of belief and asking ourselves if we do believe, and what it means in our everyday lives. We can go to adoration and go to Confession. We can attend our parish penance service. We can pray the Stations of the Cross, pray the Liturgy of the Hours, pray the rosary. We must pray, every day. We can fast from food, TV, foul language, gossip, and the list goes on and on. We can give alms, in a genuinely sacrificial manner, to the poor. As Catholics we know all of these things. It is not a lack of "things to do" that have many of us scratching our heads on Holy Thursday wondering why Lent was really not any different for us than any other forty days throughout the year. What we lack is a conversion of the heart. We don't have to seek far to hear God speak to us. The Church in her wisdom provides us in the Liturgy of the Word at Mass what our hearts yearn to hear. In the Lenten liturgies the Church prays what she believes and teaches, and in word and sacrament the Lord directs us toward his Divine heart.

HOW MIGHT THE SCRUTINIES OF THE RCIA PROCESS HELP THE PARISH AS A WHOLE?

On the 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays of Lent we participate in the Scrutinies. The universal Church hears the stories of the Samaritan woman, the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus. These readings were chosen to be the driving force of prayerful introspection, surrender, and conversion. They offer powerful images for all of us of need, surrender, sin, conversion, faith, and healing. In our faith journey with those seeking Baptism, we must stir our souls, as if they were dying campfires, to expose any pieces of ourselves that have not been purified by the burning love of the Holy Spirit. We are challenged with the Samaritan woman at the well when we thirst for the Lord, who knows what we need and provides it; we beg, with the man born blind, to see Jesus, who is the light and gives us sight; and finally we lie with Lazarus within the tomb of oblivion and death, built with the stones of our own sins, until Jesus reaches out his hand and pulls us from the pit. Take this gift of the Church and use this group of readings as Lenten reflections. Read them slowly, asking the Lord to give you the grace to hear what is being said to you. Share these readings with your children or your spouse.

SACRED HEART CHURCH HOLY WEEK 2018

PALM SUNDAY

MARCH 24/25

MASSES SATURDAY AT 5:00 PM

SUNDAY AT 8:00 & 10:30 AM

HOLY TUESDAY

MARCH 27

**ST. JOSEPH CATHEDRAL
CHRISM MASS AT 6:00 PM**

HOLY THURSDAY

MARCH 29

MASS OF THE LORD'S LAST SUPPER AT 7:00 PM

FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

MARCH 30

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE AT 3:00 PM

HOLY SATURDAY

MARCH 31

EASTER VIGIL MASS AT 9:00 PM

EASTER SUNDAY

APRIL 1

MASSES AT 8:00 & 10:30 AM