

First Sunday of Lent, February 18, 2018

Genesis 9:8-15; Psalms 25:4-9; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:12-15



by Sister Joan Campbell SP

Human Life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2258) the Catechism tells us that God made us to show forth God's goodness and to share with us everlasting happiness in heaven. To gain the happiness of heaven, we must know, love and serve God in this world. (5) We are taught this from an early age.



But why did God make ME? One day I was talking to a young lad who said he was learning about CREATION. I asked him "What is CREATION?" He responded, "What Creation means to me is that God looked around one day and saw that I wasn't here and God made me!" This answer spoke volumes to my spiritual life and my ministry: "ME" with all of my gifts, talents, and uniqueness... Also "ME" with all of my challenges and tendencies... I am to respond to God's infinite LOVE in God's special plan just for ME.

In a prison setting, I would invite the inmates to spend some time exploring their personal, unique, individual relationships with God. During this Lenten season each of us can spend some time on our 'desert experience with God,' reflecting honestly with God and ourselves: Where am I on life's journey at this time? The Devil tempted Jesus (Mk 1:12-13). What are my temptations, misplaced actions and/or desires, unused God-given gifts?

Jesus challenges us: "Repent and Believe," (Mk 1:15). He died on the cross for MY sins. God loves ME with unconditional love - waiting for ME to respond. How can I renew at a deeper level - MY love for God? How can I deepen MY relationship with God as MY source of strength and peace?

Reflection on the words of Psalm 25 as they apply to ME:

Show ME your ways, Lord, teach me your PATH for ME

Do not remember the sins of MY youth & MY rebellious ways;

And according to your LOVE remember ME.

Continue to teach ME your PATH for ME

And help ME to transform MY LIFE to stay on MY PATH...

On a daily basis, I find the Labyrinth a helpful tool as I invoke the Holy Spirit to help ME on my path...

With a finger on the Labyrinth, I follow from the outside to the center. The Holy Spirit is in the center waiting for me.

On the way in I reflect on ways that have NOT been as God would have wanted for me that day...

Then in the middle, I BASK IN THE HOLY SPIRIT...

Reflecting on LOVE, PEACE, FORGIVENESS, JOY...

Once I feel "filled with The Spirit",

I take the path out, asking The Spirit to help me to keep on MY PATH, "The Way of the Lord" FOR ME on the next day...

I find this to be focused, helpful, specific, relevant and meaningful for ME...

Then I close with a prayer, something like:

"Thank you, God for everything in my life. The good and the bad.

Some were blessings and some were lessons."

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