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The Diocesan Family Conference - April 26, 27, & 28 2019

Guest Speakers: Bishop Hector Vila - Bishop of Whitehorse; Dr. Michel MacDonald - Catholic Organization for Life and Family; Jeff & Renee Lockert - Catholic Christian Outreach; FacetoFace Ministries; Cat.Chat; Bishop Albert Thevenot, M. Afr...Join us for the 3 Day Diocesan Family Conference - **Registration until April 12, 2019.** For more information, email Fr. Millan Sajonas bmjs1981@gmail.com or adultfaith@padiocese.ca You can also contact the members of the Adult Faith Formation Commission or your local Adult Faith Formation Coordinator. Hoping to see you at the Diocesan Family Conference!

Suggested Materials:

- (1) *Holy Confidence: The Forgotten Path for Growing Closer to God* (book) by Fr. Benedict Rogacci;
- (2) *I want to See: What the Story of Blind Bartimaeus Teaches Us about Fear, Surrender and Walking the Path to Joy* (book) by Fr. Roc O'Connor, SJ;
- (3) *Three to Get Married* (CD) by Archbishop Fulton Sheen;
- (4) *The Shroud of Turin* (DVD) by David Rolfe.

For more resources: padiocese.sk.ca or bmjsajonas.com



Lenten Scripture Meditation

Luke 19:1-10 The Conversion of Zacchaeus

Luke 22:7-20 The Last Supper

Luke 22:39-53 The Agony in the Garden and the Arrest of Jesus

Luke 23: 26-46 The Carrying of the Cross and the Crucifixion

Next issue's contents:

John 20:19-31: Jesus' appearances to his disciples; Getting to know a patron saint of our diocese; Bible Study, Resources for faith formation, and much more...

Editors:

Sr. Mariette Bilodeau (SK, Canada), Matthew Allen Newland, PhD (QC, Canada), Fr. Millan Sajonas (SK, Canada), and Very Reverend Maurice Fiolleau (Vicar General).

ADULT FAITH FORMATION COMMISSION DIOCESE OF PRINCE ALBERT

IMDVS March 2019

Luke 15:11-32: The Prodigal Son

By Fr. Bernabe Millan Sajonas

The Parable of the Prodigal Son reveals God's overflowing love. The father in the story personifies the invisible God who cares for the bad and the good alike, both the unrighteous and the righteous. God's way is loving, reaching out to those who go astray and comforting the ones who do not comprehend. There is no boundaries for His love, which compounds the conventional understanding what it means to love unconditionally, completely, and selflessly.

Being independent and finding one's way generally denotes maturity. The younger son distances himself from home by asking his share of his father's possessions, thus, indicating his desire for autonomy. Yet going out on his own to a foreign country, the younger son squanders his inheritance. Without foresight and self-control, his attitude shows us his lack of maturity. When famine strikes the land, and having spent his inheritance, the younger son finds himself as a hired hand in a pig farm. Despite working, he cannot even satisfy his hunger with the food provided to the animals.

Coming to his senses, the younger son remembers how even his father's workers have enough to eat and more. Whether his conversion happens due to a contrite and repentant heart (where he realizes his mistake), or just because of the shortage of food, both can be deduced from the parable.

From a distance, the father sees his younger son on his way back home. The father cannot contain his joy and so he runs outside to meet him. Moved with love, he embraces and kisses his younger son. In turn, the son expresses his remorse, willing to accept the consequence of his actions, losing his status as "son", and willing to be considered as a slave. However, the father responds only with compassion, restoring his younger son's dignity and prepares to celebrate his son's return with a feast.

Out in the fields, the elder son missed the reconciliation between his father and his younger brother. When he hears the music and dancing, he wonders what is happening and asks one of the servants. The elder son is disappointed and jealous; he does not understand how his father can forgive a son who disrespectfully asked for an inheritance (indirectly wishing for his father's death) in order to take his share of his possessions. The elder son refuses to share his father's joy and declines to join the celebration.

Now, how the father knew about his elder son refusing to go inside the house to join the celebration is not narrated in the parable. Yet, the father again goes out and meets his elder son. Patiently, the father listens to the elder son's complaint who expresses his anger to his father stating that he works for him (Continued in page 2)

(Continued from page 1) like an obedient slave but never had been offered even a goat to celebrate. The elder son did not forget to point out his younger brother's squandering of the father's property, and how the father has rewarded this misdeed with a feast. Such an attitude from the elder son may give an idea of the motives of his obedient servitude, but it may just be an expression of his bitterness for not being appreciated for his service and good deeds. Nevertheless, the loving father comforts his bitter elder son and tries to make him understand the cause for joy.

The loving father explains to his elder son that the reason for the feast has nothing to do with his brother's errors or mistakes, but rather the fact that his brother begged for forgiveness, and has come back ready to accept the consequence of his actions. The celebration and rejoicing is because the father is gaining back his son, who was lost and is found, was dead but is now alive.

God's mercy is unconditional and faithful. Like the father in the story, God cares for all his children. He embraces and restores grace to the penitent. He sees the deeds of his children striving in goodness and in charity. This season of Lent affords us a time for repentance and renewal. It gives us great comfort to know a loving Father who is always ready to forgive a contrite sinner. It gives us great assurance to know a loving Father who provides the necessary grace to help a persevering child. God never rejects anyone, rather, it is people who could refuse God's invitation for a relationship. Moreover, like the Father in the parable, God restores lost relationships between brothers and sisters.

Aware of the abundant mercy of God, the sacrament of penance and reconciliation is a wonderful sacrament. It gives us an opportunity to ask for forgiveness for our sins, errors, and mistakes. It reestablishes our relationship with God and His sanctifying grace, which allows us to share in the Divine Life of God. Moreover, it restores human relationships that may have been broken from distrust, humiliation, betrayal, and jealousy. Confession gives inner peace and a time for healing. It strengthens our spiritual life and our desire to do good.

Reflection Questions:

1. Have you committed mistakes and errors for which you are now sorry for? Can you remember some of these failures?
2. What are the concrete ways that you have tried to make amends for these deeds?
3. How do you treat others who are striving to change for the better? What do you do to support them?
4. In this season of Lent, have you taken the time to go to confession? What are the preparations that you have done to celebrate the great feast of Easter?

Getting to know...St. Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Based on St. Matthew's account, Jesus is the carpenter's son (Mt 13:55). Luke says that Jesus is Joseph's son (Lk 4:22). Jesus is known as a carpenter, (Mk 6:3) the same profession as Joseph, his foster father. In the 7th century, pilgrims visited a place in Nazareth believed to be the "Carpentry Shop of Joseph." There is a church built on a site of an earlier 12th century Church where granaries, caves and wells were used by the early inhabitants of Nazareth. It is also identified by later traditions as the "House of Joseph," which could have been the home of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

The foster father of Jesus is not known to have said anything in the scriptures. However, he is described as an upright and discreet man, and his actions confirm this. Joseph's "yes" to God is revealed through his obedience to the message of the angel, taking Mary as his wife (Mt 1:24), his protection of Mary and the child Jesus from danger (Mt 2:13-13, 21-23), his providing for the holy family and his caring for Jesus and Mary (Lk 2:22, 39-40, 45). Thus, Joseph is a doer, a man of action, a worker.

His feast day is celebrated on March 19. St. Joseph is the patron saint of several Churches in the Diocese of Prince Albert such as in Elkrige, Barthel, Neilburg, Marcelin, and Prince Albert. He is presented to us as a model for Christian living. His silence in the Scriptures could reflect his attentive mind and discerning heart to the message of God through the angel. His active participation to the promptings of God could reflect his obedience to His will, not only in words, but most especially in deeds. St. Joseph challenges us to be attentive to God's words and untiring workers in God's vineyard. (See IMDVS November 2017 Issue)

Family Circles - Faith, Prayer, Life & Charity

The Adult Faith Formation Commission is organizing a diocesan wide advancement of family faith formation. Family Circles Program is a Roman Catholic based faith catechesis exploring the fundamentals of Catholicism and the promotion of devotions. It aims to connect families through prayers and family time activities. It also endeavors to unite families to make faith concrete through charitable outreach.

Families interested in joining, or who to know more about this initiative, please contact the Adult Faith Formation Commission or email bmjs1981@gmail.com or call 306-763-5677.