



Reflections on..... The Psychology of Jesus

SHORT MAN CLIMBS TREE TO SEE JESUS, ENCOUNTERS VALUE-GIVING LOVE.

“The language of psychology illuminates the personalities and behaviors of men and women throughout the Bible,” stated Georgette Dionne at the April 8th LFFA meeting. When we read the Bible, we see psychological principles being lived out in relationship. Jesus comes and challenges the negative psychological principles, and introduces the concept of value-giving love to those he encounters.

As humans we are wired to survive and to employ behaviors to meet our needs and goals. We know that we need love to survive and studies have shown this. But sometimes we doubt and entertain devilish questions such as “What’s wrong with me? Who am I? Am I enough? What else can I do, should I do? Am I really making a difference, etc.” We enter a land of deficit and focus on our inferiority and our defects.

However, this is not the way that Jesus sees us or wants us to see ourselves. He approaches us with love that gives us value even when others do not accept or understand it. It affirms that we are loving and loveable, that we are enough, and that we are beloved of God. This love acknowledges and elevates location and movement rather than the judgmental assertion that “actions=character & identity.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- The Psychology of Jesus.....1
- Easter Greeting.....2
- Open Wide Our Hearts.....3
- Echoes of Faith Emmaus Edition.....4
- 5 Tasks of Catechesis for Diverse Learners...5
- Education for Blind/Visually Impaired Children.....5
- Public/Live-streamed Masses for the deaf.....5
- Walking with Families...6
- CYLT.....7
- Maine Catholic Youth Gathering.....7
- What’s Next at LFFA.....8
- Inspiration.....8
- Prayer8

The book sets out a simple formula for applying Jesus' steps into our own pastoral ministry:

1. **We value our own efforts and the efforts of others.** In a sense we meet those we serve where they are. We go to them! Understanding does not mean embracing negativity and toxicity.
2. **We put aside our own agendas and listen to the other person's perspective.** We ask questions and harnessing a non-judgmental attitude, in order to adopt a genuine, caring attitude.
3. **We nurture a relationship with the other person.** We value how each person grows, and we support those we serve, as they manage their own "movement." We realize that truth prevails in God's time.
4. **We honor the need for time to grow.** We honor the Holy Spirit's work and we grow alongside the other person.
5. **Those who we serve are changed and so are we.**

To learn more/to order a copy of "*the Psychology of Jesus*" click [here](#).

For a copy of Georgette's slideshow click [here](#).



To the hill of Calvary where Jesus died

To the tomb that Joseph of Arimathea did provide

To that sorrowful day of mourning and waiting

To that glorious day when the tomb is empty illustrating:

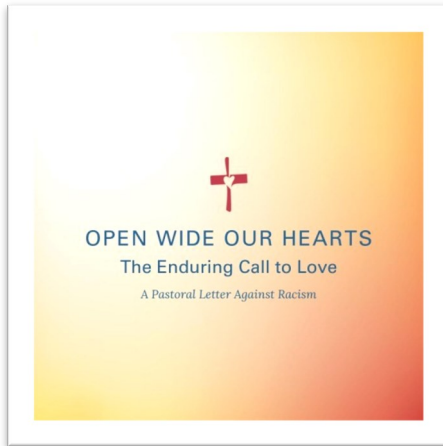
That our Savior is Risen and alive.

May these events be close to your heart and resurrect hope in you and may your Easter joy thrive

Sincerely,

OLFF Team

OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS.... COMBATting RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA



The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has put together a statement addressing the devastating rise in reported incidents of bullying, verbal and physical assaults, and violence against Americans of Asian and Pacific Island Heritage.

“As Catholic bishops, we find these actions absolutely unacceptable. We call on Catholics, fellow Christians and all people of good will to help stop all racially motivated discriminatory actions and attitudes, for they are attacks against human life and dignity and are contrary to Gospel

values,” writes the USCCB. “As we wrote in our pastoral letter [Open Wide Our Hearts](#), racism is a failure to acknowledge another person as a brother or sister, created in the image of God.”

The statement issued last May when rates of racism and xenophobia began to increase calls Catholics and all people of good will to work toward “a stronger resolve towards unity, demonstrated through acts of solidarity, kindness and love towards one another, so that we can emerge from this crisis renewed and stronger as one American people; a people that places value in every human life, regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, or religious affiliation.”

Open Wide Our Hearts states that **“to press forward without fear also means cooperating with God’s grace by taking direct and deliberate steps for change. It means opening doorways where once only walls stood.** As bishops, [they] commit themselves to the actions of acknowledging sin, being open to encounter and new relationships, resolving to work for justice, and educating themselves etc. in hopes that others will do likewise in their own lives and communities.”

In addition to Open Wide Our Hearts and the statement addressing racism and xenophobia, USCCB has also produced a version of the Stations of the Cross focused on overcoming racism and xenophobia. This resource intertwines prayer, scripture, short paragraphs about racism and unites those things to the Passion of Christ in a clever way making it both an opportunity to learn and a deep and prayerful experience. The Stations of the Cross come in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

For more resources on how you can help combat racism and xenophobia click [here](#).

ECHOES OF FAITH EMMAUS EDITION



“Were not our hearts burning within us (Lk 24:32)!”

Our first cohort of participants in the Community track of the Echoes of Faith Emmaus Edition program completed their first module on ***the Scriptures***. Now the participants move forward in the journey as they work on the ***I Believe, We Believe*** module. We are excited to welcome **3 new participants** to the program. Please continue to pray for the group as a whole as they seek to echo faith in their workplaces, homes, neighborhoods, and in their daily lives.

If you or adults from your parish want to enroll in Echoing Faith, there are entry points coming up. **New registrations must be sent to Hannah Gonneville by May 17, 2021 to begin the next module in June.** New participants in the community track will begin the “***The Role of the Catechist***” module along with already enrolled participants. Those choosing the Self-Paced track will have 12-18 months to complete the modules depending on when they enroll. [Click](#) to see the full calendar or contact Hannah Gonneville for details about how to submit registrations from the parish (individual must work through a parish or Catholic school to register for the program).

There will be other entry points in July 2021 and January 2022. If you have questions about Echoes of Faith please feel free to email echoing-faith@portlanddiocese.org or call (207)-773-6471 and a member of the OLFF staff will get back to you as soon as possible.

5 TASKS OF CATECHESIS FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

The National Catholic Partnership on Disability will host three workshops on the Five Tasks of Catechesis for Diverse learners in June and August. The themes for the workshops will include:

Task 3: We Pray (for Self and Others)—June 10, 2021 at 1:00pm ET

Tasks 4&5: We Live a Christian (Moral Life)-We Live with Others (Missionary Spirit)—August 12, 2021 at 1:00pm

There is no cost to attend the workshops.

Click [here](#) for more information.



EDUCATION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH BLINDNESS OR VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

Catholic Charities Maine provides assessment, instruction, and consultation to blind and visually impaired children birth through 21, their parents, and school personnel.

Education Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Children (ESBVIC) has employed 17 certified teachers for the visually impaired (TVI's). TVI's use an expanded core curriculum which covers: compensatory or functional academic skills including communication modes, orientation and mobility, social interaction skills, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, career education, use of assistive technology, sensory efficiency skills and self determination. Click [here](#) for more information or call **(207)-299-1936**.

PUBLIC AND LIVE-STREAMED MASS IN SIGN LANGUAGE

On April 18 at 9a.m. Our Lady of Hope Parish will host an in-person and live-stream Mass in American Sign Language for those in the deaf community. Fr. Kevin Hughes will sign and celebrate the Mass. "I have worked with deaf Catholic communities in St. Louis, Missouri; Rochester, New York; and Toronto, Ontario, where I also served as a deacon in the St. Francis de Sales deaf ministry. I love praying in sign and I am eager to get involved with deaf ministry here," said Fr. Hughes.

Deaf Catholics in Maine who are unable to attend the above Masses either in person or via livestream can visit www.facebook.com/deafmass to watch a livestream of an ASL Mass each Sunday at 11:30 a.m. or watch a replay of the Mass at any time. To view weekly homilies signed by Fr. Michael Depcik, visit www.frmd.org.

WALKING WITH FAMILIES ACROSS THE DIOCESE

Directory for Catechesis, 124 : *Enabling families to take up their role as active agents of the family apostolate calls for “an effort at evangelization and catechesis inside the family” (Amoris Laetitia, 200). The greatest challenge to this situation is for couples, mothers and fathers, active participants in catechesis, to overcome the mentality of delegation that is so common, according to which the faith is set aside for specialists in religious education. This mentality is, at times, fostered by communities that struggle to organize family centered catechesis that starts with the families themselves.*

PONDER

WHO ARE THE FAMILIES IN THE PARISH?

What commonalities do you see among families who are engaged in the parish ? What commonalities do you find among families who do not yet participate in parish? What does this tell you about your current efforts?



PRAY

READ THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Consider praying with the question “what similarities are there between the apostle’s situation and that of our situation right now?”

PRACTICE

As parish leaders identify what has worked well during this pandemic in terms of connecting with families. Determine what will you continue these strategies as part of ongoing ministry.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Perhaps begin by taking inventory of all the households registered in the parish. Which families do you already know and which families do you not know? Make it a point to reach out to families you do not know.

ENCOURAGE FAMILIES TO PRAY TOGETHER

Whether it’s a mealtime prayer, going to Mass together (either in person or virtually), a cross on the forehead before bed, or a family rosary, encourage families to spend time engaging in both individual and communal prayer.

AMORIS LAETITIA

QUOTE

“The spirituality of family love is made up of thousands of small but real gestures.”

#315

I (Hannah) spent this Easter with my aunt, uncle, and my 9 year old cousin. It had been a while since I had seen them and I was happy to be with them and experience their family life. It was a wonderful visit and we created some wonderful memories that I will treasure forever. There were two moments that struck me. My uncle (who is not Catholic) had gone to Italy before the pandemic started and placed in my hands a Rosary he had gotten while he was there. Fast forward to Easter Sunday. My cousin had just finished his egg hunt and had collected a bit of money from the Easter bunny. During the egg hunt I had jokingly said “I wish the Easter bunny would leave me some money.” My cousin without skipping a beat slides \$5 across the table toward me. These two events struck me as I began to realize that my cousin had mirrored the generosity he had seen his father extend towards me and as I realized that these small gestures made up the spirituality of our own family love.

CATHOLIC YOUTH LEADERSHIP TEAM

Do you know a teen that is a leader in the parish? Do you know a teen who is a good role model and is an example of 1 Timothy 4:12? If so encourage them to apply to be a part of the Catholic Youth Leadership Team. **Applications are due back to OLFF by April 19, 2021.**

The Catholic Youth Leadership Team (CYLT) is comprised of youth in grades 11 and 12 from across the diocese, who serve as peer leaders. Working with the Office of Lifelong Faith Formation and the Coordinator of Youth Ministry, the CYLT team serves a year-long term (July – June) planning, organizing, facilitating and evaluating diocesan youth events including the Middle School Rallies, Journey Retreat and Catholic Youth Convention. Members also are encouraged to use their gifts as leaders in their parishes, schools and communities to be the light of Christ to all those whom they encounter.

Click [here](#) to find out more or to print off an application

MAINE CATHOLIC YOUTH GATHERING



As previously shared, the annual Youth Convention will not be taking place in person again this year. Instead, the Maine Catholic Youth Gathering will be happening the evening of **Sunday, April 25 from 6:30-7:30pm**. This live event will feature prayer, interactive activities and talks. As it will be

taking place on Good Shepherd Sunday the theme for the evening is One Shepherd, One Flock.

- [Click](#) for more information.
- [Click](#) to register.

LFFA CONVERSATION CORNER



The thing that stuck out most from Steve and Kathy Bierne's presentation on Supporting Married Couples was that as parish leaders our job is to begin setting young adults up for a healthy, successful marriage before they come for marriage prep. We need to learn to accompany couples on their journey and allow them to be who they are and not who we wish for them to be. Just like Jesus did with the apostles we need to meet these couples where they are and provide them with support and encouragement to answer the universal call to holiness and to spread that holiness to their families, friends and beyond.

WHAT'S NEXT AT LFFA (MAY 13, 2021)

On **Thursday, May 13, 2021** Michelle Valcourt will present on middle school youth ministry. Michelle is faith formation director for St. John Paul II Parish in Scarborough, Cape Elizabeth, and South Portland. She will share tips and tricks that she has learned in her many years involved in youth ministry.

We look forward to what Michelle has to say about how we can better accompany and engage our middle school youth in the Catholic faith.



“Each young person’s heart should thus be considered “holy ground “, a bearer of seeds of divine life, before which we must take off our shoes in order to draw near and enter more deeply into the Mystery (Christus Vivit 67).”

Inspiration

A few years ago I wrote a poem called “Resurrection of the Dead.” It was a letter to God explaining grief and God’s response. As we continue in this time of pandemic where grief abounds, we also find ourselves in this joyous Easter season this line from God sticks out to me: **“But rather than resurrect the dead in the grave now, maybe the solution is to resurrect the dead in you.”** What has the Lord been resurrecting in your heart recently?

~ Hannah

PRAYER

Give me Your eyes to discern the beauty of your face,
Hidden under the world’s sorrow
Give me the grace to be a Veronica;
To wipe away the ugliness of sin
From the human face,
And to see Your smile on the mouth of pain
Your majesty on the face of dereliction ,
And in the bound and helpless,
The power of Your infinite love.
Lord take my heart
And give me Yours

Taken from: The Way of the Cross by Caryl Houselander