

Palm Sunday Examination of Conscience

You might remember – three days before Christmas – when Pope Francis addressed the Roman Curia, reflecting on “15 Spiritual Diseases” that were inhibiting their service to the Church. The media described the presentation as an “attack,” “a bomb,” a “blistering critique” of the Curia. USA Today’s headline was: “Pope Francis: ‘Merry Christmas you Power-Hungry Hypocrites.’” The National Catholic reporter was a bit more subtle: “Pope Issues Scathing Critique of Vatican Bureaucracy in Pre-Christmas Meeting.”

I can remember feeling rather smug and self-righteous about it all... thinking: ‘Well, they got what they deserved; it’s about time! Until I read and reflected on the 15 Spiritual Diseases that Pope Francis identified, and my conscience began telling me: ‘Well, Fred, you might have a touch of these diseases too!!! Examples: At times I feel like I’m indispensable or can let ‘busyness’ get in the way of my spiritual and physical recharging; or enjoy a piece of gossip... calling my friends: “Did you hear the news...?”! And the list goes on.

My sisters and brothers, we are now concluding our Lenten Journey, our “spring-cleaning of our hearts,” as we begin to commemorate the holiest week of the Church liturgical Year, as we reflect on Christ’s passion, death and Resurrection; and are reminded that our journey as Christians is a *continuous conversion*, becoming more and more the persons and community God is calling us to be: by repenting – dying to those diseases in our hearts – that get in the way of life and love and wholeness and being reborn, resurrected as a *new creation, new persons, a new and healed community*. Monday evening we gather at our Holy Week Penance Service – as sinners – to celebrate Christ’s forgiveness, Christ’s healing..., so that we can begin anew on our spiritual journey.

Some of us may have avoided the Sacrament of Reconciliation because of bad experiences in the past. Let me assure you that on Monday evening there will be five very compassionate priests available: myself and Fr. Andy; Frs. Joe Neville and Don Kirby and our friend Will Evans – all truly caring, compassionate guys – to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation for those who choose to receive it.

If you’ve never been, you might want to give it a try this year. We’re going to reflect a bit on those “15 Spiritual Diseases” that Pope Francis addressed at Christmas. Finally, I strongly urge you to consider attending our celebration of Holy Thursday, with the washing of feet and celebration of the Last Supper; our Good Friday commemoration of Jesus’ passion and death, with the adoration the Cross, and our Easter Vigil where our two Catechumens Aaron and Danny will be baptized and our Tina and Charles will be received in Full Communion! My experience has been that this Celebration of Resurrection is a great spiritual experience; a great source of healing and spiritual renewal. If you’ve never been, you might want to give it a try...!