

Days of Reflection:

Reason, Race, & Civil Discourse
with Don Anderson

October 17th & October 24th
9am-noon
Holy Redeemer Parish

October 24 Retreat and Reflection Booklet

Reflections on Day 2: October 24

Over the next week, prayerfully reflect on the following scripture passages, videos, and questions. The questions are divided into four sections involving a theme. Prayerfully go through the sections throughout the week and discuss as a family, with a friend, or with a spouse.

Daily Opening Prayer: Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Daily Closing Prayer: Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate,

despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me.
Amen.

Section 1: What You're Being Sold

Scripture: *The LORD God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it. The LORD God gave the man this order: You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From that tree you shall not eat; when you eat from it you shall die. Now the snake was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He asked the woman, "Did God really say, 'You shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden'?" The woman answered the snake: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, or else you will die.'" But the snake said to the woman: "You certainly will not die! God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know good and evil." The woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. When they heard the sound of the LORD God walking*

about in the garden at the breezy time of the day, the man and his wife hid themselves from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. The LORD God then called to the man and asked him: Where are you? He answered, "I heard you in the garden; but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid." Then God asked: Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat? The man replied, "The woman whom you put here with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, so I ate it." The LORD God then asked the woman: What is this you have done? The woman answered, "The snake tricked me, so I ate it." - Genesis 2: 15-17, 3:1-13(NAB)*

Quote: "By mixing a little truth with it they had made their lie far stronger." - C.S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Last Battle*

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

Looking at the above scripture passage and the Narnia quote: What cunning lies and half-truths did the Serpent use to trick Eve into sinning against God?

When I fall into sin, what half-truths do I use to justify my behavior? How can I fight these temptations?

Why do you think Socialism and Communism sound good in theory? What truths are promulgated that make it easy for Christians to support socialism?

How do these truths strengthen the lie that Socialism and Communism are trying to sell?

Have I been tricked into believing that Communism and Socialism are good for society? How might the evidence presented in Don Anderson's talk change or challenge my perspective?

Looking at the secularization of society: what do you think the negative effects have been? How has this secularization helped open the public towards the idea of socialism?

Section 2: What is True Freedom?

Scripture: *For you were called for freedom, brothers. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love. For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you go on biting and*

devouring one another, beware that you are not consumed by one another. - Galatians 5:13-15(NAB)

Video: Youtube *Homily on True Freedom* by Father John Hollowell
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZucTvtPbUk>

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

After reading the scripture passage and watching the video, what is the difference between our modern interpretation of freedom and the true interpretation of freedom?

If freedom is the ability to choose the right/good thing, how would socialism and communism take away that freedom?

In America right now, do we have freedoms (in the Catholic sense) that are being taken away from us? If so, what are they? What dangers does this pose to the Catholic Church?

Am I living a life truly free from the slavery of sin? Do I have the ability to choose the right thing in my daily life? What am I addicted to? (Addictions can encompass drugs and alcohol to phone and social media addictions)

Section 3: Selling Strategy - Fear and Courage

Scripture: *For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control. So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, nor of me, a prisoner for his sake; but bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God. - 2 Timothy 1:6-8(NAB)*

Video: Youtube *Take Courage!* By Father Mike Schmitz of
Ascension Presents

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyk_de2Omwg

Discussion/Reflection Questions:

Think about the parallels between what is happening in America and what has happened in other revolutions. In particular, focus on the subtle secularization of Christian history in America (BC/AD vs BCE & CE, not calling St. Joan of Ark “Saint”, etc.). How might these slow and subtle changes in

our language and terminology desensitize us to the secularization of society? How might this open the door to Socialism and Communism?

How have I been desensitized to the secularization of society? Why or why not? How might God be asking me to bring Him into the public square? (remember: God often calls us to witness to our faith in subtle ways - making the Sign of the Cross before meals, having a picture of Jesus or the Saints at your work desk, wearing a Saint medal or crucifix, etc.) Is there anything I am afraid to do that God might be calling me to?

In normal conditions, people won't accept Communism or Socialism. How do you think the current COVID situation is contributing to the current social upheaval? How might fear play into this?

Am I willing to give up my true freedom (in the Catholic sense) out of fear? Why or why not?

How is God calling me to have fortitude and be courageous during this time?

Section 4 - Christian Charity (Love)

Scripture: *If I speak in human and angelic tongues* but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. For we know partially and we prophesy partially, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love. - 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (NAB)*

Reflection/Discussion Question:

Look at the above Bible verse. How hard is it to live out what love demands? (love is patient, love is kind, etc.) How is God calling me to be more charitable at this time?

How do you think cultivating the virtue of true Christian charity (love) within myself might help fix the issues in our society? How will it change how I interact with my neighbor? How will it help me navigate difficult conversations about current events with people I disagree with? How will it inform how I vote?

Looking back on these past two weeks, what was the most impactful piece of information you learned from the presentation? Through the reflection booklets, did you learn anything about yourself that you didn't know before?

Did these past two weekends help you discern the truth? Did you experience greater clarity? How has it changed how you will interact with the media?

Further Resources:

As Go God's People, So Goes the World

- About: Our daily individual conversion as Catholic Christians is necessary to preserve the world. Jesus started with only a small cell of people, the world followed. Our individual conversions can start a “revolution” of a new rebirth of Christianity.
- Call (205) 672- 2000 to order the booklet; copies are FREE, you just pay for shipping

Book: Bathe Seven Times: A Contemplative Look at the Seven Capital Sins

If you are struggling to pinpoint the vices you struggle with, this book is for you! *Bathe Seven Times* gives you an in depth and detailed look at the Seven Deadly Sins, and will help you grow in self knowledge significantly.

Who am I to Judge? Responding to Relativism with Logic and Love with Dr. Edward Sri on Formed.org

In this study program we'll explore the classical view of morality and find that it's not merely a set of guiding principles for theoretical situations—it is an entire way of life. What is "right" and "wrong"? Is what's right for you right for me? Is there a right and wrong for everyone, all the time? These are difficult questions to discuss in our culture. We live in a society that supports the opinion that each person should make up his or her own morality—that there is no moral truth that applies to everyone. Many of us have been affected by the relativistic outlook that pervades the modern world. Maybe some of us wonder whether there really is an absolute right and wrong for everyone. Or maybe we accept that there is a moral standard for all, but we don't know how to explain our moral convictions in a convincing way. Maybe some of us are afraid of saying something is immoral because we're afraid of offending others or of being labeled intolerant. How do we talk about morality in a relativistic world?

