

December 02, 2018 – First Sunday of Advent

MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED
NOW AND FOREVER!!!

SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS

Five Dysfunctions of a Team Part I

Last October, I attended the Amazing Parish Conference. The goal of the people putting on this conference was to “give busy pastors and their teams the tools they need to transform their parishes—moving from maintenance mode to mission communities that are truly alive!” The “Amazing Parish” organization takes the works of business consultant Patrick Lencioni as the foundation for the model. Patrick Lencioni, founder and president of The Table Group, a management and consulting firm. He is also the author of the bestselling book: *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*. In this book he lays out what he feels are the five major issues and problems that prevent leadership teams from being their best.

Over the next few months, I plan to introduce many aspects of the Amazing Parish program at St. Joseph and therefore, I thought it would be good to share with you some of the insights that I have gained from attending the conference and from reading *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*. I believe that these reflections will also be helpful to non-St. Joseph parishioners who regularly read my writings because most, if not all of us, find ourselves on different teams and the advice Patrick Lencioni gives will be helpful in dealing with the other people on your team and in making your teams more productive.

DYSFUNCTION #1: THE ABSENCE OF TRUST

Mr. Lencioni begins talking about this dysfunction by pointing out the importance of trust. He writes “Trust lies at the heart of a functioning cohesive team. Without it teamwork is all but impossible.” He then goes onto define trust as “In the context of building a team, trust is the confidence among team members that their peers’ intentions are good, and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the group. In essence, teammates must get comfortable with being vulnerable with one another.”

Mr. Lencioni points out that being vulnerable and trusting others

THOUGHTS OF THE DAY



Sunday

"Advent, like its cousin Lent, is a season for prayer and reformation of our hearts. Since it comes at winter time, fire is a fitting sign to help us celebrate Advent...If Christ is to come more fully into our lives this Christmas, if God is to become really incarnate for us, then fire will have to be present in our prayer. Our worship and devotion will have to stoke the kind of fire in our souls that can truly change our hearts. Ours is a great responsibility not to waste this Advent time."

Monday

It is about submitting – Putting our hands together to prayer is a gesture symbolizing our need to submit to our will as the Centurion did.

Tuesday

"It's sharing your gifts, not purchasing gifts... - Anonymous

is not always easy. "Achieving vulnerability—based trust is difficult because in the course of career advancement and education, most successful people learn to be competitive with their peers, and protective of their reputations. It is a challenge for them to turn those instincts off for the good of the team, but that is exactly what is required of them."

Three suggestions that Patrick Lencioni recommends for building trust are simple things but they require people to be vulnerable. In other words, it requires people to take risk. It should be easier to take risks in a Church setting than in the business world but I know that this not always the case and that is sad.

The first thing Patrick Lencioni suggests to build trust is that a group needs to stress confidentiality and to define exactly what confidentiality is. For the most part, it should mean that what is said in the group is not shared with anyone outside the group without permission of the person who shared the story in the first place. I think people should also be clear that the exception to this rule is when keeping something secret could lead to someone being harmed.

The second thing that Patrick Lencioni suggests to teams in order to build trust is for members to be aware of that human behavior tends to excuse one's personal behavior by blaming it on our circumstances and by blaming another person's actions on evil intentions. For example, you may say to yourself, "that I had to cut that person off, because I need to get to work on time," but simply assume that the other person cut you off because they are evil, or that they are bad drivers. The truth of the matter is that when most people hurt us, they do so more from a mindset than neglect.

The third and final thing Patrick Lencioni suggests teams take time to tell each other their personal stories. The bond between people strengthens the more that they know about each other. He suggests that members take time going around the room and telling each other something interesting about them.

I want to end today's reflection on the first dysfunction and ask you to reflect on how much you trust God and if any of the three suggestions that Patrick Lencioni provides for teams to build trust, will help you build trust with God.

Wednesday

"A thermometer only measures the temperature. It reacts to the situation. "A thermostat determines the temperature. It controls the situation. – Joel Weldon

Thursday

"If speed is a way of life for our restless age, then, 'speed kills' is its epitaph. The paradox is that speed does not intensify or improve our experience of life. Rather, it destroys it. By contrast, patience gives us the opportunity to practice discernment, to test what is true, and separate it from what is not true. Patience allows us to live more fully and realistically." – Donald DeMarco

Friday

Has Christmas in our day actually become a bundle of worries for us rather than a blessing? – Anonymous

Saturday

Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God – Angel Gabriel



BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

12- 2-18 First Sunday of Advent Lectionary: 3 Gospel LK 21:25-28, 34-36

Spiritual Reflection: "Advent, like its cousin Lent, is a season for prayer and reformation of our hearts. Since it comes at winter time, fire is a fitting sign to help us celebrate Advent...If Christ is to come more fully into our lives this Christmas, if God is to become really incarnate for us, then fire will have to be present in our prayer. Our worship and devotion will

have to stoke the kind of fire in our souls that can truly change our hearts. Ours is a great responsibility not to waste this Advent time." - **Fire of Advent** - Edward Hays, A Pilgrim's Almanac.

Spiritual Questions:

1. How is this Advent going to be different than past Advents?
2. What logs (big things) do you need to do in order to keep the fire of faith alive in your heart?
3. What kindling (small things) do you need to do in order to keep the fire of faith alive in your heart?
4. Why do you think the Church begins Advent with Today's Gospel?
5. Why is it so hard to be vigilant?



ADVENT PRO-LIFE PRAYER: O shepherd of Israel, hearken, O guide of the flock of Joseph! Rouse your power, and come to save us from the culture of death O Lord of hosts, restore our nation to a nation that respects life in all its stages.

if your face shine upon us, then we shall be safe. O Lord of hosts, how long will you allow your people to contribute to the culture of death? You have fed them with the bread of heaven and given them your divine love to drink in ample measure. Help us to stop fighting over earthly goods and help us stand up for life even if our enemies mock us. O Lord of hosts, restore us, if your face shine upon us, then we shall be safe and we shall once again life in a culture of life.



Please join us in praying a special prayer each month for Catholics who have fallen away from their faith.

ADVENT PRAYER FOR FALLEN AWAY CATHOLICS: A Root shall come forth from the stock of Jesse And a Flower shall rise out of his root! And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him — the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness. The people that walked in darkness shall see a great light, For a Child is born to us and a Son is given to us. To Him all power shall be given. His Name shall be: Wonderful One, Strong God, Eternal One, Prince of Peace. He shall sit on the throne of David, And He will found a new Covenant. May this Advent and Christmas Season be a time in which those who have fallen away from the faith may return. - Amen.

CATHOLIC PRAYER:

BLESSING AND PRAYERS FOR ADVENT WREATH

Description:

During the Advent season families should spend time together preparing for the approaching celebration of the birth of Christ. An Advent wreath can be a great focal point for family prayers and holiday celebrations.

An Advent wreath is a wreath of laurel, spruce or similar foliage with four candles that are lighted successively in



This Week's Trivia

Match the words that are most alike.

1. Petition
2. Rock
3. Pope
4. Liturgy

- A. Bishop of Rome
- B. Public Works
- C. Peter
- D. Supplication



Last Week's Answer

Put the following Biblical People in Order from First Mentioned to Last Mentioned.

- 1-Moses 2-Samson 8-Lydia 7-Barnabas 5-Nehemiah 3-David 4-Jeremiah 6-Peter



the weeks of Advent to symbolize the light that the birth of Christ brought into the world. Traditionally three of the candles are purple, the color of kings and of penance. A rose-colored candle is used to mark the Third Sunday of Advent as a time to rejoice over the closeness of Christmas and the coming of Christ.

Children love the beauty of the simple traditional ceremony. Lighting candles in an Advent Wreath is a simple way to start a tradition of family worship in the home. Those who participate will cherish the experience all their lives.

Prayer:

Each day your family should gather around the Advent wreath, generally before the evening meal. The proper number of candles are then lighted and a prayer is said.

BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

It starts at the evening meal on the Saturday before the first Sunday in Advent with the blessing of the wreath. (The head of the household is the one designated to say the prayers, following which various members of his family light the candles. If the group is not a family, then a leader may be selected to say the prayers and others appointed to light the candles.) The following prayer can be used.

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

Leader: O God, by whose Word all things are sanctified, pour forth Your blessing upon this wreath and grant that we who use it may prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ and may receive from You abundant graces. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The wreath would then be sprinkled with water. Then follows the prayer which is said before the evening meal each night of the first week in Advent.

FIRST WEEK The following prayer should be repeated each day during the first week. After the prayer, the family's youngest child lights the first purple candle. (Family members can also take turns lighting and blowing out the candles on each night.)

Leader: O Lord, stir up Thy might, we beg Thee, and come, That by Thy protection we may deserve to be rescued from the threatening dangers of our sins and saved by Thy deliverance. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The candle is allowed to burn during evening meals for the first week.

SECOND WEEK The prayer that follows is to be repeated each day of the second week. After the prayer, the oldest child lights the first and second purple candles.

Leader: O Lord, stir up our hearts that we may prepare for Thy only begotten Son, that through His coming we may be made worthy to serve Thee with pure minds. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The two candles are allowed to burn during the evening meals of the second week.

THIRD WEEK The joyful Sunday in Advent (known as "Gaudete") is represented by rose (or pink) instead of the penitential purple color. Each night during the third week the mother of the family lights the pink, as well as the two previously burned purple candles, after the following prayer has been said.

Leader: O Lord, we beg Thee, incline Thy ear to our prayers and enlighten the darkness of our minds by the grace of Thy visitation. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The three candles are allowed to burn during the evening meals of the third week.

FOURTH WEEK The prayer that follows is to be repeated each day of the fourth week. After the prayer, the father lights all four candles.

Leader: O Lord, stir up Thy power, we pray Thee, and come; and with great might help us, that with the help of Thy Grace, Thy merciful forgiveness may hasten what our sins impede. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The four candles are allowed to burn during the evening meals of the fourth week.

After the fourth week, the penitential season of Advent is over and the time to rejoice is at hand. The Advent wreath is transformed into a Christmas wreath. Ribbon and candles are replaced with red ribbon and long red or white tapers (to be lighted at breakfast on Christmas morning) and, if desired, other festive decorations can be added.

In addition to having an Advent wreath as part of your family's Christmas celebration, create your own Advent calendar of actions you and your family can take each day to bring you closer to Christ. Write the schedule activities on a calendar that is prominently posted. These activities could include donating toys to a drive for needy children, bringing used clothing to a collection for homeless people, volunteering at a soup kitchen, reading a Christmas poem or story aloud, attending Mass together or placing a crèche in your home.



Humor

10. What's so funny about forbidden fruits? They create many jams.

11. Why couldn't Jonah trust the ocean? He just knew there was something fishy about it.

12. What kind of man was Boaz before he married Ruth?

Absolutely ruthless

13. The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose.

Mosquitoes come close, though.

14. What kind of car does Jesus typically drive? A Christler.

