

December 23, 2018 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED  
NOW AND FOREVER!!!

## SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS

### Five Dysfunctions of a Team.

As we enter into the fourth week of December, we continue our look at Mr. Lencioni's book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* and how it can help us develop healthy relationships with others. I still 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 4: Avoidance of Accountability**

Patrick Lencioni defines "Accountability" as "In the context of teamwork, however, it refers specifically to the willingness of team members to call their peers on performance or behaviors that might hurt the team." What causes is "the unwillingness of team members to tolerate the interpersonal discomfort that accompanies calling a peer on his or her behavior and the more general tendency to avoid difficult conversations."

Accountability, I believe is a hard concept for Christians because we often confuse forgiving someone with letting them off the hook or with tolerating their bad behavior. Holding someone accountable though has more to do with loving the other person and wanting to help them improve than it does with pointing out other people's faults. Think of this way, a teacher is not loving her students if she never tells him or her that  $2+2=4$  even though they keep saying  $2+2=5$ . Some people need to know that certain behaviors are not appropriate. The opposite of accountability then in this situation is enabling. Enabling is where we allow someone or tolerate someone doing a bad behavior because we do not to spend the time or energy of lovingly confronting them.

To hold someone accountable in a Christian way involves supporting the person if they attempt to improve. One of our teachers in the seminary would say "you can only confront as much as your willing to support." It also means that you have prayed over the situation and know that the behavior the person keeps doing is harmful and not simply annoying or the not the way you would handle it.

Holding people accountable as a team though is also not about throwing people under the bus because you realize that if your teammate fails your whole team fails. The best teams that I have been apart of have been

## THOUGHT OF THE DAY



### SUNDAY

*"For hate is strong And mocks the song Of peace on earth, good will to men." Then pealed the bells more loud and deep.*

*"God is not dead, nor doth he sleep!  
The wrong shall fail, The right prevail,  
With peace on earth, good will to men!" -  
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

### MONDAY

"You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand." – Woodrow Wilson



### CHRISTMAS

How amazing is it that God became one of us!

### WEDNESDAY

A reporter asked a renowned concert

teams in which people have been able to help each other grow and cover for each other when one makes a mistake or is going through a hard time.

Patrick Lencioni recommends three ways for teams to overcome this problem. The first is to make sure goals and standards are clearly published so everyone can know them. "The enemy of accountability is ambiguity, and even when a team has initially committed to a plan or a set of behavioral standards, it is important to keep those agreements in the open so that no one can easily ignore them."

The second way in which teams can help build accountability is to establish simple and regular progress reviews. Patrick Lencioni writes "A little structure goes a long way toward helping people take action that they might not otherwise be inclined to do." Spiritually speaking, I think this is why the Church recommends things like small prayer groups, spiritual direction, and regular celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The final way that Patrick Lencioni recommends team rewards. "By shifting rewards away from individual performance to team achievement, the team can create a culture of accountability." I think one of the problems in our world today is that our society tells us to look for individual rewards instead of team rewards.

In his presentations at the Amazing Parish Conference Patrick Lencioni continually talked about the need for people to come out of their silos and come together for the benefit of the parish and Church. What does this look like? This means we take a risk and learn about the different ministries going on in the parish. It means we take time to thank those who are working (often behind the scenes) to make the parish better. I think it also means that we treat each other with respect.

### **Three Things That You Should Know About Me:**

Patrick Lencioni believes that it is very important for teams to work well, team members need to be vulnerable with each other. Therefore at the end of these reflections, I am going to include three things about myself that I think will help you understand me better as a person.

1. I believe that God expects great things out of us and is continually calling us to grow.
2. I believe that you should only be willing to confront someone as much as you are willing to support them.
3. I believe the virtue is always in the middle of two vices. You can do something too much or too little. For example pride (vice)-humility(virtue)-Self-hate(vice).

violinist, who just finished performing at Carnegie Hall, how she became so skilled.

She replied that it was by "planned neglect" "Early on in my studies I planned to neglect everything that was not related to my goal."

Stephen became a Good Disciple through plan neglect.

### **THURSDAY**

"Self-Esteem: the New Reformation"

"We all know people who do not lie, kill, steal, commit adultery, yet they live a life of ease, comfort and non-involvement. They appear to be kind and gentle and we are tempted to judge them to 'loving people.' But real love is a sacrificial commitment. Until these 'good people' set God-glorifying goals, they are making no potentially creative and constructive commitments. If they take no daring risk in mission, they're good – but good for what?"

-Robert Shuller

### **FRIDAY**

"We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light." – Plato

### **SATURDAY**

"The late Vince Lombardi actually said, 'Winning is not everything – but making the effort to win is.' Lombardi knew you can't win them all. But, he also knew that giving your best effort, giving everything you have, is what really makes winners."



## **BREAKING OPEN THE WORD**

**December 23, 2018 Fourth Sunday of Advent Lectionary: 12 Gospel LK 1:39-45**

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

**Spiritual Reflection:** In today's Gospel - Matthew's version of Jesus' birth - the whole grand event depends on Joseph, whose life has been turned upside by the angel's news. Joseph accepts the son as his own, not as a matter of biology, but as a matter of love and compassion, of trust and faith. God's birth in our midst depends on human partners - a Mary, a Joseph, you, me - willing to claim the unwanted, love the helpless and neediest, put aside our fears and dare to hope that God is with us. In this season and in every season, may we imitate the compassion and faith of Joseph: to seek understanding and acceptance within our families even at the cost of our own expectations and hopes, to be sources of affirmation and support for our spouses and children

**Spiritual Questions:**

1. How can you develop compassion for your family members?
2. Are you willing to sacrifice your own expectations and hopes in order to help others?
3. Are you willing to sacrifice your own expectations and hopes in order to understand those who are different than you?
4. How can you be a source of affirmation and support for others?
5. How can you be more like St. Joseph?



**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.



## This Week's Trivia

List the Nine of Choirs of Angels in Order  
—  
\_\_\_ Principalities \_\_\_ Angels \_\_\_ Powers  
\_\_\_ Archangels \_\_\_ Virtues \_\_\_ Thrones  
\_\_\_ Cherubim \_\_\_ Seraphim  
\_\_\_ Dominations

## Last Week's Answer

1. Wreathes at Christmas Time symbolize eternal life. – Yes = Circle
2. Candy Canes at Christmas Time symbolizes the shepherds that came to see the infant. = True
3. St. Francis of DeSales is attributed as creating the First manger scene. False – St. Francis of Assis
4. There were only three wise men. False. There were three gifts but we don't know how many Wiseman.

# CATHOLIC PRAYER:

## If I decorate...

corate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

**Love** stops the cooking to hug the child. Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the husband. Love is kind, though harried and tired. Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

**Love** doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way. Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

**Love** bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust, but giving the gift of love will endure.



## Humor

