

Relationship with GOD

More than Just SUNDAY

Look in God's Mirror

Who are you? What value do you have, what are you worth?

Do you have plenty of money? Do you live in a beautiful house, take exciting vacations and have a picture-perfect family? Are you good-looking and physically fit? A person of influence and status in your business, school, or community? Are you that popular person everyone wants to talk to at parties?

This is what pretty much everyone is after, right? Even if it's never quite enough. But of course there are those things that come along that embarrass us, that hurt us, that make us wonder if we really measure up.

Look in the mirror. What do you see?

We learn who we are mostly by what is reflected back to us by others, starting when we are babies. Our image is formed by the feedback we get from our parents, our family, our classmates and colleagues, those who like us and those who don't. Social media amplifies this – Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, hundreds if not thousands of texts each week. Sometimes life can seem like one huge competition, a never-ending contest for “likes” and “followers.”

Recent studies tell us that in this age of social media people are communicating more than ever, at least with their phones and tablets. And yet they are lonelier and more stressed than ever. Depression is up, anxiety is up, suicide rates are up.

Yes, it's definitely a good time to look in the mirror, but not that mirror.

Look in God's mirror. That's where you

will find your true reflection and worth, your precious status as a son or daughter of the King of the Universe – created by Him and called to love Him and to live with Him forever.

Many people sort of believe that – and sort of don't. They aren't ready to bank on it. They hear it in church or when the radio dial hits the Christian station, and in the back of their minds they go, “Yeah, yeah, whatever....”

Here's the thing. It's true. Actually true. 100% true.

But you have to swim against the current to understand and embrace it in a way that really makes a difference in your life. An encounter with Jesus has to happen on the inside, invisibly, in the silence of your heart, when all around you the visible stuff of life is loudly trying to draw you away. That is what the saints have always done, from St. Francis of Assisi to St. Teresa of Calcutta to St. John Paul II. It requires daily conversation with God, the grace of the Sacraments, and regular reflection on God's Word, especially in the Gospels.

This weekend five busloads of young people and adults from our diocese are returning from the March for Life in Washington, D.C. Why did they march? They marched because they understand the precious value of every human person, from the moment he or she is conceived and given an immortal soul to the moment of being called into eternity by God at natural death.

If all of us truly saw ourselves and others in this way, you know what would disappear? Every violation of human dignity, from abortion to

human trafficking to sexual abuse to pornography to racism to bullying. Our world lacks reverence for human dignity because it fails to see its radiance and its root; it fails to look in God's mirror.

Two weeks ago seventeen thousand young people attended the five-day Seek Conference in Indianapolis, sponsored by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS). Two busloads (65 students) from UW-La Crosse attended, along with many others from around the diocese. The center-point, amid the excellent speakers and the youthful exuberance, was Jesus Christ in the Mass, in Adoration and in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In Him these young people, including my oldest daughter, longed to see and deepen their identity and their priceless worth.

Pray for all these young people, that they may continue to behold themselves and their neighbors in God's mirror. May it be evident in the quiet peace of their hearts and the reverent respect shown in their actions, transforming themselves and the world around them.

May we take seriously the challenge to behold the same, and to do the same. This passing world needs saints.

Chris Ruff

Director of the Office for Ministries and Social Concerns



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