

**Penance/Reconciliation Talk...Retreat Season 2011-2012**

**Fri Eve**

**Introduction:**

Our retreat theme this year is: Rooted in Christ

The goal of being rooted in Christ is to become more and more like Christ – a Christ-like transformation... I'll speak more about that Sunday morning.

Our question this evening is: what gets in the way of this transformation?

When Jesus came into his public ministry his opening words were:

*Repent and believe in the Good News.*

Good News – God loves us and call us.

Repent: What gets in the way of our responding? What do we have to repent of?

I would like to speak of several obstacles to our being rooted in Christ.

**I Spiritual Laziness**

When I go for a walk along Carson St., South Side, I notice all of the gyms, with so many people exercising on the treadmills or using the weight machines: Tune up the body, make it firm and good looking!

So many people today are aware of proper diets: No junk foods, not too much cholesterol!

I often wonder about people's spiritual health, their spiritual condition.

I sense a lot of spiritual starvation in our culture.

How do we feed our spiritual lives?

There is time for TV, the internet, tweeting and cell phone use... but little time for God.

Do we take time for God each day?

Blessed Mother Theresa described *prayer* as "making room for God in our hearts."

Do we make room for God in your cluttered hearts each day?

How often during the day do we turn to God to say thank you, or help, or I'm sorry... or maybe, "Lord, be my shepherd this day?"

Do we have a special prayer time each day when we can do some spiritual reading, or pray the psalms, or read one or two of the stories of Jesus and just sit with them?

Or are we just too busy, our lives a bit too cluttered, our hearts a bit too stuffed with other things?

How is your spiritual health?

Are you spiritually lazy?

## **II An unexamined Life**

How often do we get caught up in the 7 deadly sins and don't even realize it?

These will certainly stifle our being rooted in Christ.

Any one of these can starve our spiritual life.

The 7 deadly sins – those powers of death, those engines of personal destruction...

What do we take to Jesus this day to touch and heal and *make new*?

- Does envy and jealousy consume hearts,
- Or perhaps resentments and anger and bitterness eat away at our hearts – it's so hard to forgive.
- What about greediness – always wanting more, even if we don't really need it? Or can't afford it? Daily commercials year after year can brainwash us to a life time of infantile greed and insatiable discontent.
- Are we lazy – a couch potato – never really interested in doing anything to help anyone else? Or always procrastinating, never quite getting around to it?
- Are we spiritually lazy – not bothering to pray each day, and not bothering to bring God into our everyday lives in our neighborhood, our school, our job... even our family?
- Are we trapped by lust – a \$12 billion dollar a year industry in our culture? Are we of the opinion that a little porn doesn't hurt anyone... It hurts men who begin to view woman as boy toys, and it hurts women who feel like just another piece of meat, up for grabs.
- Are we a bit too arrogant – as if we are so much better than so many others... do we give thanks for our blessings, rather than showing them off too vainly?
- Are we a bit too gluttonous - too much food, too much booze, too much shopping –trying to fill our need for God with all these other things?

What do we need to repent of?

How often do we say,

*Jesus, Master, have pity on me.*

*Jesus, I bring myself to you... sinner that I am.*

*Help me not to get depressed by my sinfulness,*

*Nor give in to mediocrity.*

*Bring your healing touch to my sinfulness*

*And strengthen my rootedness in you.*

### **III Unrestrained Sensuality**

Commercials on TV tell us hour after hour, day after day... there's something wrong with you? You need to have this new and improved, money back offer to make you happy and fulfill you. After all, you deserve it.

Too much of this corrupts our lives and turn us into self-centered, selfish, and self-pampered individuals –

shallow entertained consumers, who are consumed by what we consume.

Do you ever get road rage, because you can't get to where you want to go fast enough and the idiot in front of you doesn't understand your entitlement to get to our destination fast...?

A bit self-centered on your part?

But on TV, all of those car commercials show these cars zooming thru the city streets. How can I be happy without doing that?

How self-centered and self pampering we can become.

### **IV Uncharity**

How hard it is at times to treat others kindly and with respect.

Office gossip and detraction, treating others shabbily and impatiently, a bit too much stubbornness... having to have our own way all of the time.

Rage talk radio is almost always angry, resentful, demonizing, harsh and demeaning... and this type of behavior and speech has regrettably poisoned too much of everyday life.

How much do I take part in this uncharity?

Do I treat people with respect? With kindness? Even those I disagree with?

Do I pray for the difficult, toxic people in my life?

I don't have to be their best friend, but do I have to treat them harshly?

How would being more rooted in Christ change some of this type of behavior of mine?

Do I need to repent of any of this kind of activity?

**Conclusion**

There is it... Some obstacles to our being better rooted in Christ and letting Christ transform us.

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation we come to Jesus, recognizing some of the behaviors and attitudes with which we need his help and healing... we take responsibility and ask...

Jesus, help me with my sinfulness.

I do want to be more rooted in you... these roots leading to transformation... making me more like you.

Help me Jesus. Amen.