

THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON AND THE DESIRE FOR GOD

The purpose of this flyer.

Scripture says, *Be prepared to render an account for the hope that is in you.* (1 Peter 3:15) Well, could you? If someone said, "Tell me about Jesus," what would you say?

Is your faith alive? To be alive is to be growing and maturing. Most of us studied the truths of our faith years ago when we were still young children. But for many, little formal study has happened since. This need not be so. Each week at Holy Comforter – St. Cyprian Parish adults are given opportunities for prayer, study and reflection. Among these opportunities is the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (R.C.I.A.). Each Tuesday at 7:00 P.M. in the Rectory Adults preparing to receive Baptism, Confirmation, or to be received into full Communion with the Catholic Church, gather to study the teachings of our faith. But, long time, even life-long Catholics, are also strongly encouraged to attend these classes. Not only will you find your own faith enriched, but those preparing to become fully initiated will be encouraged by your presence. You will also be inspired by their interest and faith.

Each weekend from now until after Easter, a flyer like this will appear in the bulletin. It will describe the topic that will be covered in Sunday's R.C.I.A. class.



This will enable those who attend to prepare for the class. It is also hoped that your interest will be stimulated and that you might consider attending some or all of the classes. We begin this week by considering the desire for happiness and the call of faith.

Desire

What it is that really makes you happy? There are endless ways this question could be answered. We desire so many things: food, water, shelter, clothing and creature comforts. We long for a sense of belonging, affection, & peace. Sometimes we hope for stability and simplicity, at other times we yearn for change and variety. Our hearts are a sea of desires, wishes and longings.

Have you ever considered that your desires are in fact infinite? Can you even think of a time that you were ever entirely satisfied, a time when you needed absolutely nothing? Even if you can imagine such a time, it didn't last did it? In fact our

desires are infinite, without limit. Our hearts long endlessly for completion and fulfillment. This is particularly stunning since we live in a finite world. No matter how much this world offers us it will never ultimately satisfy us for the world is finite and our desires are infinite.

In this way our heart teaches us something very important about ourselves: We were not made for this world, we were made for something, for someone, who is infinite, who alone can satisfy us. We were made for God. The scriptures help us to understand the most basic longings of our heart: *Of You my heart has spoken: "Seek His face." It is your face O Lord that I seek; hide not your face! (Psalm 27:8-9). Or again, Only in God will my soul be at rest, he is my hope, my salvation (Psalm 62:1,5) St. Augustine wrote classic words to describe our hearts' truest longing: Thou hast made us for Thyself O Lord and our hearts are restless till the rest in Thee. (Confessions 1,1). A contemporary also song beautifully proclaims the truth of our ultimate happiness: God and God alone will be the joy of our eternal home. He will be our one desire, our hearts will never tire, of God and God alone! All of these passages describe the testimony of our heart which says, "I was made for God. He alone can satisfy my thirst and my yearnings."*

Well..?

When Jesus encountered a Samaritan woman at a well (John 4) he asked her to consider the deepest desires of her heart. She had come to the well because she was thirsty. But the worldly well which she frequented could not ultimately satisfy her. Its water would quench her thirst only for a brief time and then the thirst would return. Jesus invites her to consider what her thirst was really saying to her. Could it be that it was a symbol for a deeper longing for God himself? Jesus said to her: *"Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.* (Jn 4:13-14) Thirst is a symbol for all our desires. What are your desires really saying to you? Where and to whom do they really point? Is it not into heaven and unto God that they point? Seeking to satisfy our desires at the well of the world may satisfy us but it is only for a moment. The thirst will surely return. That is why Jesus says: *If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'*" Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive...(Jn. 7:37-39).

The true source of our dignity.

Here then is the glorious truth about our desires: they have their origin in God Himself, they are the infallible sign of our dignity as well since it is through them that we know God is personally calling us to share in His life and His love. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (which, other than the Scriptures, will be our primary reference in this course) has this to say about the

meanings of our longings: *The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for...With his longings for the infinite and for happiness, man questions himself about God's existence. In all this he discerns signs of his spiritual soul. The soul, the seed of eternity we bear in ourselves, irreducible to the merely material, can have its origin only in God* (Catechism # 27, 33).

Consider the glorious dignity of the fact that God calls you by name. Think for a moment of someone you greatly respect or admire. Perhaps he or she is a celebrity. Wouldn't you be ecstatic if this celebrity took time to come from a distant city just to visit and speak with you? Would you not be greatly moved and feel quite uplifted? Well consider this truth, the God of the whole universe who sits enthroned in heavens and to whom all praise and glory belong, this God calls you by name and desires your company. He loves you through and through and earnestly wishes to commune with you. We are often tempted to base our value and dignity upon what we do, or what others may or may not think of us. But here is the true source of our worth: the fact God loves us and calls us by name. *The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God. This invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being. For if man exists it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his creator.* (Catechism # 33).

Our Journey

Although man can forget God or reject him, He never ceases to call every man to seek him, so as to find life and happiness. But this search for God demands of man every effort of intellect, a sound will, "an upright heart", as well as the witness of others who teach him to seek God (Catechism # 30).

We have begun a journey together to consider the revealed truths of our faith. In so doing we are listening carefully to our own hearts which tell us to seek the face the Lord. We are also listening to the voice of God who whispers respectfully, persistently and fervently within the depths of our hearts calling us unto Him. Our response to God's call is the obedience of faith. In our time together we will listen to God and consider how He speaks to us in our hearts, in creation, in scripture, and in the teachings of the Church. God invites us not only to hear his word, but also to trust him and base our lives upon what he has revealed. God promises rich blessings to the faithful, we will not be disappointed:

Let, every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Harken diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in the fulness. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant (Isaiah 55:1-3)