Faith Formation Files: Vol. 2, Issue 4 October 20, 2019

Prior to me and my husband, Kory, meeting, he obviously had his own life. He was born and raised in Lakeview. He had his immediate family. He was married to a woman who was also a lifelong Lakeview resident. Her family was also around. As life tends to go in cycles, in the recent years before our meeting the generation of his parents were nearing the ends of their lives. In just a matter of a few years, Kory ended up losing his grandpa, his dad, an aunt, 2 uncles, and a cousin. In addition to these losses, somebody he knew robbed his house. He lost not only material goods, but also someone who he thought was a close friend. Then his mother passed away. Less than six months later, his wife died unexpectedly. She was only 40 years old. It was quite a time of loss and suffering for him.

Fast forward 5 months…he and I met. On one of our first few dates he was telling me about all this trauma in his life. As is often the case, he complained, “Why me?” I very vividly remember asking him, “Why NOT you?” He was shocked. He had never considered that question! We talked about the fact that none of us are exempt from pain and suffering. I had lost grandparents, classmates, and friends. Diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer’s, and Huntington’s had touched people in my life with no regard to age, role and responsibilities in life, or other factors that should have been taken into consideration. That day marked a change in his perspective that has ultimately changed his whole outlook on all that life throws at us.

Too often we expect that our faith is going to bring us a life free of pain and full of ease. We think if we are good, then we won’t have accidents, illnesses, or other troubles. Likewise, we try to justify one’s suffering by making some kind of connection between one’s afflictions and one’s sins, as if God punishes us for being human, weak, and prone to sin. Neither of these beliefs works. Evil does exist. Anguish, grief, and sorrow are very real things.

We need to remember that not even Jesus himself was immune from hurt and misery in his life. In the story where He healed the ten lepers, but only one returned to show his thankfulness, Jesus must have felt ingratitude from the others. (Luke 17: 11-19) In John 8:37-59, we hear of the Pharisees who were spreading lies about Jesus being an illegitimate child born out of fornication. This surely must have hurt His feelings and made Him angry. What about His broken heart over the unbelief in Jerusalem that caused him to cry in Luke 19:41? Then there was the time His good friend, Lazarus, died. He saw that the sisters and community members were grieving his death. He was “deeply moved and troubled.” In fact, “Jesus wept” at the loss. (John 11:1-45) And of course, there’s the betrayal and misery that came from denial by His friends, being charged without guilt, and His ultimate crucifixion. (If you’ve ever seen the movie, The Passion of the Christ, then you know Jesus experienced immense pain and suffering.) No, not even Jesus was exempt from the pain and suffering that comes with loving others and being human.

So why does evil exist? CCC 309 gives us this response, “…To this question as pressing as it is unavoidable, and as painful as it is mysterious, no quick answer will suffice. Only Christian faith as a whole constitutes the answer to this question.” And that is the goal of our Faith Formation programming. We are trying to better understand our faith and figure out how to live it in today’s broken world.

Today’s Faith Formation is the A Family of Faith follow-up meeting. We will begin with a potluck meal in Fellowship Hall right after the 11 am Mass. Bring your books and your Journey Board. We will go over the October lessons and activities. We will share how people are building their own domestic churches and passing on their faith through their daily living.

Blessings,

Julie Gould

faithformation@ctknsf.org