



Thoughts on the Journey

Suanne Gettings—Pastoral Associate

March 14, 2021 - John 3:14-21

When you think of evil in the world, *what* and *who* do you think is responsible? It seems it is on the increase and has permeated all aspects of society. Let's be honest with ourselves, evil is a slippery slope and when we buy into it, regardless of how insignificant the transgression may seem, the whole of humanity changes and makes a permanent scar on who we are as people. The rippling effect of sin is sometimes subtle, but make no mistake about it, it dims what light there is in the world.

Several weeks ago, I sat down to watch a new series that was advertised on Netflix. It is a drama about a 30 year old single mother raising a 15 year old daughter: the mother lacking morals and maturity, the daughter being confused by it all. Within 30 minutes of the first episode, I was appalled by the content and turned it off. It's not the first show I've seen on Netflix or Amazon that I would classify as pornography; more and more of these movies and series are appearing as options for entertainment. They are seductive displays of sin that gradually lure you in to a false sense of a *it's-really-not-that-bad* mentality. The more we watch them, the more we justify their content. The more we justify their content, the more willing we are to accept the unacceptable, taking us down a hole of self-deceit that changes our moral dignity as Christians.

So what's the harm you might ask, "I'm not hurting anyone". When we compromise what we know to be morally sound, the sin that results will pick at our foundation of truth. Cracks will begin to splinter our moral fiber and the standards that hold our virtues in place will collapse.

In this week's gospel from John, Jesus is addressing Nicodemus who was a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin. Nicodemus visited Jesus to discuss his teachings. Jesus began by making reference to Moses who lifted up the bronze serpent in the desert (as instructed by God) to save his people who were dying by being bitten by snakes. Jesus then said, "So must the Son of Man be lifted up so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life." Then Jesus told Nicodemus that God loved the world so much that he gave his Son so that all may be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned. Jesus then said,

“ And this is the verdict: that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light. ”

To the question, what's the harm? The statistics bear a grim picture of the damage: Pornography is an addiction that changes the brain over time. It contributes to domestic violence, human trafficking, other addictions, divorce, objectifying women, premarital sex, and the list goes on and on. Most importantly, it significantly violates the sacredness of who God created us to be as his beloved sons and daughters.

Regardless of whether our sin is pornography or some other evil that has a hold on us, there is salvation! Jesus calls us to come out of the darkness and into the light of his love, mercy, and truth. He came into the world, not to condemn us but to save us. If you have any doubt about his profound love for you, just look at his cross of crucifixion...then make some time for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and free yourself from the bonds of sin.