

Laws of Commitment & Self-Control

When we were in the planning stages for our Generations of Faith process last summer, we were faced with a dilemma. We had 10 Commandments & only 8 monthly sessions to cover them! After some thought, we decided it made sense to combine the 6th ("You shall not commit adultery") & the 9th ("You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse) into 1 session. So for March we will learn about the Law of Commitment & the Law of Self-Control. The timing couldn't be better, because the season of Lent is the perfect time for each of us to work on these virtues in our relationships & daily lives.



Just as I was preparing for this column, the story of Tiger Woods reappeared in the media. I confess I listen to sports talk radio in my car (probably too much), & the story was talked to death by the radio hosts on my way to work last Friday, over lunch, & on my drive home. I listened to 3 different nationally syndicated programs & the subject was the same:: Tiger's apology! Among the callers were voices of condemnation & voices of sympathy. Cynics & skeptics who said Tiger was motivated just for money, but others who felt he sincerely was sorry.

Reminding myself of Jesus' own teaching not to judge others, I listened to the apology. What struck me was Tiger spoke of his faith. He said, "Part of following this path for me is Buddhism...I was raised a Buddhist, & I actively practiced my faith from childhood until I drifted away from it in recent years. Buddhism teaches craving for things outside ourselves causes an unhappy & pointless search for security. It teaches me to stop following every impulse & to learn restraint. Obviously, I lost track of what I was taught." The Buddhist teaching is identical to the teaching God gives us in the 6th & 9th commandments, and it is the same for all the great world religions. Our truest happiness can never come from things outside ourselves, but only by living in committed relationships practicing self-control & self-sacrifice. For Christians, this is the way of the Cross, & the great mystery we ponder during Lent. In our ever-changing society with its false promises to satisfy our spiritual emptiness, we need to practice these virtues more than ever.

See you at Generations in March,
Eric Stromberg, Director of Faith Formation