

PARISH BOOK STUDY

The Holy Longing by *Fr. Ron Rolheiser*

Large Group Conversation, February 14, 2012



Summary:

The evening was facilitated by Janet Schaeffler, OP and there were approximately 30 participants. The opening prayer theme was "Making Christ's Church", which was a segment of The Journey Before Us, a Pastoral Letter by Adam Cardinal Maida.

The final four chapters of the book focused on these major themes:

- The Church / Ecclesiology
- Justice and Peacemaking
- Sexuality
- The Journey Ahead

Participants were invited to choose a topic or chapter which they would like to discuss further. Three groups were formed as a result.

Feedback to the large group: (Comments from the tables)

The Paschal Mystery

- We live the Paschal Mystery with Christ, we are together in our suffering
- We can relate to the experience of Jesus through the suffering in our lives and in the world
- Our lives are imperfect yet we make peace with that reality
- Criticism was part of the experience of Jesus and it's part of our human experience as well
- The word "cling" is powerful. We can relate to wanting to "cling" to God in our yearning

Justice and Peacemaking

- What are we willing to give up in order to ACT for others?
- It is difficult to move from charity to Justice
- We tend to think it's too political to deal with justice issues, charity is easier yet Jesus focused on Justice rather than charity
- We have a long way to go and need more ideas on how to work for justice

Sexuality

- Sexuality is more than finding a lover, it's about over-coming loneliness
- We need to change deep, ingrained attitudes
- There is a basic longing that each person experiences and often it is confused with sexual intimacy
- We need to start early with children and help them develop healthy attitudes about sexuality

The Journey Ahead

The group was invited to discuss the following:

1. What do you do during those times when you are too restless to have spiritual thoughts, too depressed to find words for God, too exhausted to do anything?
2. Which of Rolheiser's commandments made sense to you?
3. What would be your commandments for the future?
4. As you finish this book, is there one NEW thought that comes to your mind?
5. Is there something you might DO differently?
6. Do you have any NEW Questions?

Summary from the Large Group: (Table Discussion)

- The Spiritual Journey is a life-long marathon, not a sprint!
- Many new ideas and thoughts have been generated here
- Adults learn best when they are in conversation with others about something that they care about
- Everyone has a piece of the truth, no one has all of the truth

Everyone was thanked for their participation in the book study and for the thoughtful feedback.

Surveys were distributed to collect feedback for future planning. The surveys should be returned to the box in the gathering area by Feb. 26.

Sr. Janet led a closing prayer with a meditation on the song Come and Follow Me. She invited participants to Go forth and continue to long for the holy!

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