

You Faith Weavers of St. Mary
Book Study Group
February 28, 2010

Summary of Discussion:

Laura began the discussion by reviewing the purpose of the group and reinforcing the need for confidentiality and respect for other's opinions in conducting the discussion.

During the month of preparation for this meeting, Laura challenged people to write a letter to or from Fr. Edward Hays reflective of their own spiritual journey's experience like those found in The Letters to Exodus Christians. Some compiled letters on their thoughts and others shared their thoughts through the group's dialogue. Those who compiled thoughts to Fr. Hays may wish to send them to him via Forest of Peace Publishers. If there is a response from Fr. Hays, it will be shared with the group!

We discussed points made in Section one of the book.

1. It is more difficult to live our faith as a Faith Weaver, i.e. weave faith into life, that to be a pre-Vatican II Catholic.
 - a. Pre-Vatican II Catholics were passive laity. To pay, pray and obey were the virtues we were to live by in those days. It was easy just to do what we were told.
 - b. To be a Faith Weaver one must make a choice to live one's faith in the everyday activities of life.
 - c. The concept of obey was interpreted as obedience to the institutional church. However, the meaning of obey is to listen and then act. This definition of obey is more in line with being a mature Christian responding to Christ's call.

2. Fr. Hays refers to The Letters of Exodus Christians as ones who have graduated from the traditional church.
 - a. The term, graduate, is not a justification for abandoning the traditions of the church. It is an adult evaluation of the Catholic indoctrination we received as youths. It is determining the essence of the teachings of Christ and accepting the gospel values to direct our lives.
 - b. Graduate means that we make an adult choice to live as Christians and not blindly follow the dictates of the institutional church as a child is expected to follow adult authority.
 - c. To graduate is not to abandon our church, but to integrate the essence of Jesus' teachings into our lives.

3. What we experienced as a faith community at St. Mary's Parish was the best of the reforms that came out of Vatican II.
 - a. For forty years our community has been lead by ministers who taught essential Christian values and encouraged us to live these values.
 - b. It is painful to have to go through the changes we have made going from St. Mary's Parish to Faith Weavers of St. Mary's. Our community has been hurt by the fact that our community, and the good it had done, was not valued by the institutional church.
 - c. We have gained not only a graduation from the institutional conditioning of the pre-Vatican II church, but we have experience a new consciousness of what it means to be a Christian.
4. The Letters of Exodus Christian validates our experience as a faith community. It lets us know that our community is not alone in the struggle to live out our Christian ideas in these difficult times.
5. Fr. Hays presents good thoughts about the meaning of prayer.
 - a. To think of someone in a loving way is praying for that person.
 - b. To be mindful of the sacredness in nature is a prayer.

Laura showed a DVD, "Celebrate What is Right with the World", by Dewitt Jones. This movie encourages us to view life with a positive attitude. If we seek what is good we will find it. This harkens back to the theme of one of our fine ministers. When asked the purpose of going to Mass, his reply was, "To make the world a better place." We must have a vision of what is good to follow this advice.

We concluded by praying the song, "You are Mine" by David Haas.

For our next Book Review Meeting, we will continue to discuss Section 2 and move into Section 3. The date of our meeting is March 28th at 4 PM – 5:30 PM in the Parish Hall at St. Vincent DePaul Parish.