

Small Groups

Discussion Questions for August 2, 2015 – Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

This Sunday we get another short, but powerful reading from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians. If you ever listen to **We Are One Body** radio here in the Pittsburgh area (106.7 FM), you will have heard this reading at the top of each hour for station identification. St. Paul exhorts us to put away our "old self" and put on a "new self." Isn't that what Jesus is asking of the disciples in the Gospel? He knows that they are looking for him for more of his amazing feats of healing and power. Jesus asks them to put on a "new" self by believing in the one who was sent to save us: Jesus. We see elsewhere in Scripture that it's not just enough to believe, the demons believe and tremble; we must also *do* what it is Jesus does. We must follow, we must believe, and we must do what Jesus did. And that is what Jesus is telling us in the Gospel – it's not about getting the things in life that are the most important things, it's doing those things that are in imitation of Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. How could this past week have gone better if we would have tried to be the "new" self that St. Paul talks about? Can you think of a couple examples?
2. Jesus tells us to think of those things that aren't just about our bellies. Have you ever fasted outside of the Lenten season? Explain why and how it went. Would you do it again?
3. In the Message Series this week, we heard about Understanding, Openness and Self-Control. We also heard about Ignorance, Stubbornness and Overindulgence. Discuss what you thought of the message and how you're going to try to apply what you learned this week.
4. Think of a current event in the news, locally, nationally or globally, and discuss how you think being a follower of Christ could help the situation.

Closing Prayer

Holy God, Creator and Redeemer, pray for us all at this gathering and throughout the week and our lives. Be with each one of us as we leave this small group, gathered in your name and for your glory, and protect us and our families against the assaults and insults of the evil one. We know that you love all people and that we should love them because you love them – even when they are not lovable. And give others the grace to love us when we are selfish, unlovable and difficult. Give us the same peace and love that we want you to give to others when they are dealing with us. Let us see our faults, not to insult or discourage us, but so that we might more clearly see those areas in our lives that we need to change in order to be with you even more abundantly. We ask all of this in Jesus's Holy Name. Amen.

"All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ." (Eph 4:30 - 5:2)