

February 16, 2020

**From Fr. Jim . . .**



There is a story about a husband who sat on a newly covered antique window seat that his wife had treasured through many years. The man was burdened with a sense of hopelessness. Problems at work weighed heavily on him, and because of his advanced years, the man feared that he would not be able to find another job. He started to light his pipe and accidentally spilled some hot ash, which burned a hole right in the center of the window seat cover. How would his wife react to a hole in her treasured antique?

Surprisingly, his wife threaded a needle and stitched a beautiful flower over the charred spot. When her husband looked at the finished work, he realized in that moment, he could see a summary of their long life together. His heart began to soar. He had married a repairer of broken spirits, a healer of wounds, a hope-giver, a woman whose very presence was an antidote to pessimism. He understood for the very first time, that it was his wife's deep and abiding trust in God that made it possible for her to be a source of light and a giver of hope in times that might plunge others into darkness and despair.

Isn't anyone of us capable of burning holes in precious things? Without trying or meaning to do so, this can happen. We burn holes in our relationships through selfishness and thoughtlessness. We burn holes in the hearts of one another with angry words, gossip and lies. Whether we dash another's enthusiasm or ridicule their dreams or quash their hope, we burn holes. Holes grow deeper and wider when we can't be present with the attitude of Christ; when we don't forgive or seek forgiveness and when we choose not to be bearers of hope.

Although these holes are inevitable, we are free to choose how we will or will not deal with them. Will we dwell on the hole and become lost in negativity? Does the glass always have to be half empty? Is it possible to investigate a hole and see it as half full? If so, is it possible then to be a hope-giver in midst of difficulty and hard times?

The month of February is often dark and gloomy. It is a time for depression and despair. We long for healing on our wounds and broken spirits; light and hope for dark and gloomy attitudes. We can use this time to prepare for the upcoming season of Lent. Owning and naming the holes we burn in our relationships and wanting to repair them; focusing on the light rather than the darkness; finding the glass half-full instead of half-empty we will come to appreciate and believe that if we die with the Lord, we will rise with him.

Let us pray:

*Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ save me. Blood of Christ inebriate me. Water from the side of Christ, wash me. Passion of Christ strengthen me. O Good Jesus, hear me. Within your wounds hide me. Permit me not to be separated from you. From the wicked foe, defend me. At the hour of my death, call me and bid me come to you that with your saints I may praise you for ever and ever. Amen.*

(Anima Christi, Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola.)