

The Nail in the Fence:
Healing Wounds
Good Friday
April 3, 2015

WORD OF THE DAY:
FORGIVENESS

“There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence.

The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence.

Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down.

He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper.

The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone.

The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence.

The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there."

A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one.

It's true words said in anger create emotional scars; and it's better if we don't inflict wounds on each other, but if the wound happens, or happened in the past, it's important to know the scars can heal.

Think about a cut or wound in your skin:

Your body starts to heal immediately, coagulating your blood to stop the loss, then developing a scab, under which new skin grows, until the scab is no longer needed, and flakes off, leaving a red mark, which fades, until there is little or no evidence of the wound.

With a more serious wound, some therapy is needed, perhaps surgery and stitches, or plastic surgery to remove a scar.

Our bodies are an unending miracle—able to accomplish things without our even noticing.

That's a good metaphor for healing emotional wounds.

Emotional wounds, whether from words said in anger, or something even more hurtful, need to be cleaned for optimal healing.

In the case of emotions, cleansing can come in several forms.

A sincere apology (which means willingness to change) on the part of the person who lashed out, can help—but the best cleansing is one that doesn't leave you vulnerable to someone else's outbursts.

In order to heal, you need to know you won't be repeatedly wounded.

Unless a true apology, with evidence of real change, is offered, then you must stand up for yourself, and tell the hurtful person that you won't tolerate the behavior again (and be willing to act on it.)

Giving the other person an "adult time out" (retreat into cold politeness—withdraw from emotional attachment until you get a sincere apology) not only will demonstrate that you're not willing to be abused, it will also send a signal to you that you're taking care of yourself.

That creates the emotional climate for healing to take place.

Once you know you'll take care of yourself, the wound heals, and you can then move on to forgiveness.

As we listen to the Lord's Passion on this Good Friday

we are reminded that the Lord's Passion is about "emptying" oneself in order to be filled with the love of God.

As Christ empties himself of his very divinity to reconcile humankind to the life of God so, to we are called to "empty" ourselves of our own needs and expectations and use all that we have and are to create the kingdom of God in our time and place.

Today as we celebrate Good Friday, may we enter into the events of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection with open hearts and attentive minds, aware that the same venom of anger, bitterness, selfishness and arrogance that brings Jesus to the cross and crucifixion poisons the streams we drink from every day of our lives.

The word Christ shows us from
the cross is that of
FORGIVENESS.

And if we are call ourselves
HIS disciples we can do no
less.

3 Nails + 1 Cross = 4 Given