

# The 7th Sunday of Ordinary Time (Feb.24)

I remember our first T.V. when we were growing up. It was a 21 inch large body, black and white set. It was all pretty simple back then ..... black and white, 21 inch screen, only 2 channels available beginning at 5:00 p.m. and closing down at 11:00 p.m. with the late news. Look at me now ..... I measured my screen this morning ..... it is 42 inches straight across, but that is not how they measure them in terms of store sales .... they measure them diagonally ..... plastic and all included...so my set is 48 inches officially as purchased. There are all sorts of channels, and they run day and night if you wish, and have music channels if you are so inclined to tune in, all in vivid color, and even some in high definition.

It is all so amazing really ! Do you know the size of your TV screen ? Now it is fair to say that it is a set size ... some number of inches ? Right ? If you or I need a larger Screen we are going to have to make a plan ... Right ? We would naturally calculate what space I have available, what budget, what affect is it going to have on my life, and of those around me. Right ?

Now I would like to use this as a launching pad !!!!

How large is your LIFE SCREEN ? Are you happy with it ?

When you look out at your world, your experience of life, how large is your screen ? ..... How large is the screen by which you judge others, others' behavior, others' actions, others' practices ? How large is the screen by which you judge your own self, your actions, your behaviors, your own practices ? Do I judge from one screen ...the same screen ....? Or do I have 2 screen sizes ? One for others and another for myself ? Has my screen become much larger over these past few years ? How much larger has my screen become since my youth ? Do I see the value or importance of changing my screen-size ? Or am I content with that same secure one I have had since my youth ? Why should I change my screen size if I am perfectly happy with it ? I should like to ask you to grapple with that question during the course of the week ! Is My Life Screen sufficiently large enough for the Journey that I am on ? Yes homework for sure ?

Now, unlike the TV screen ..... a larger screen is available to you and to me and...it is free. But it will require a desire on my part to want it, and a degree of planning to get it home (In other words into my heart).

All of this is by way of introduction to our planned Lenten Experience. We have briefly introduced the program already ..... Our theme is very unique: “Respectable Sins.” My interior screen could so easily react to such and say: ‘There is no such thing as a Respectable Sin’ — all sin is evil and that’s that. But, I invite you to not adjust your set just yet.

The book and study guide that we will be using during the Lenten Season in our Small Groups, is written by Jerry Bridges. The sub-title is : “Confronting the Sins we Tolerate” ..... such as : Anger, Jealousy, Envy, Spite, Gossip ..... sins of the Tongue ! I am delighted and thrilled by the idea, as is our staff. We have given a great deal of thought to this and put a great deal of preparation into this process. We are very excited about the opportunities it provides us to broaden our horizons and our perspectives. I do not agree theologically, or perhaps even spiritually, or culturally, with everything in the book, but I like having to deal with such nuances in order to better clarify what I believe as a Catholic — one who is sincerely trying to grow, not in Doctrine, but in a Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ... My Lord and Savior !

A central theme in this book and teaching is that it is exceedingly easy to make judgements about others, but how genuinely good am I at adjudicating myself ? I can so easily see and make judgement about the sins / faults / short-comings of others ..... but how does that help me in seeing and knowing myself ? I can, in the course of my life, become very adept at imputing guilt, or motivation to the actions or the sins of others ..... and that is just a part of life. I didn't will myself to be that way ..... it is just a part of my Nurture and my Culture .... I have been taught, or learned, or grown into those experiences !

While that is a reality, there is an overarching question, “Am I happy with my SCREEN-SIZE ?” — the way I take in Life ? Do I have one level of judgement for others, and a much lighter one for myself ? Big Questions !

So, the ‘Enemy’ that Jesus speaks of loving in today’s Gospel ..... Is that Enemy without or within ? Is the Enemy just manifested in that person or group out there ? And I have a need to blame them because my fears, my

faults, my short-comings, and my conditioning are so great, that it gives me cause to lay the blame on them ? Could it be that I am just terrified about my own self, and I can't bear the truth of being known for who I really am ? I can't stand the thought of others seeing 'the real me'. I just don't want to be "Naked" .... Was that not the Original Sin ?

My heart really has a lot of goodness in it... I just don't like the bad things I see in me, and in order to hide or cover myself I simply blame You !

Here is what the Master says :

“What emerges from within a man, that and nothing else is what makes him impure. Wicked designs come from the deep recesses of the heart”  
( Mark 7:20-21)

About two years ago in our Staff Meeting, we were practicing Lectio Divina ..... which literally means study of His Word. We were reflecting on this passage of 'Loving our Enemies' and one of our members was given this wonderful insight :

'No one decides to be my enemy. It is I who choose to see them as my Enemy.' When someone hurts my feelings, or my pride, or my ego, I can immediately identify them as Enemy ..... As I begin my little 'Pity Party' the whole experience grows exponentially, until I have created or invented things that were never a part of the equation to begin with. The experience grows so easily into 'Poor Pitiful me, and now they don't love me anymore'. I nurture those thoughts while the other goes off merrily about their own business, knowing nothing of the plight I have created for myself.

If the enemy is within, and It proceeds from my heart, as Jesus says..... then His command "to love my Enemy" makes perfect sense ..... It's back to the initial commandment ..... Love God, and my neighbor AS Myself.

This gives life and meaning to the final line of today's Gospel :  
“The Measure with which you Measure will in return be Measured back to you”

Maybe I do just need a new SCREEN-SIZE ?

Happy Lent to YOU as we follow these Trails !

—Fr. Gerry Hurley