



How do we relate with one another?



REFLECTIONS FROM FR. ROSS

For those of you who are relatively new to the Faith Community, if you are not aware, the Friary associated with the parish is called St. Maximilian Kolbe Friary and there are six of us Friars who make up the Community. Five of us live in the Fr. Justin Senior Friars Residence that is across the street (4190 St. Francis Drive). While I am not yet an official residence of the Senior Friars Residence, my room is there and I join the Senior Friars for prayer in the morning and prayer and supper in the evening. The sixth member of our Friary is Fr. Romulus who lives and ministers at the Basilica of Our Lady of Victory. He joins us at least once a week for prayers and supper.

I recently came across what we could call the Seven Criteria of Relationships. As we find ourselves in the midst of the *Road to Renewal*, I thought it a good idea to share these criteria with you so that they could be used to look at the different aspects of our life together as a Faith Community. They can also be used by everyone to look at their personal, familial and work relationships. They are:

1) **Relational:** Do the ways we interact, work and live promote a communal dimension to our lives? Does it help us avoid too much privacy and isolation?

2) **Dialogical:** That's a fancy way of asking if the ways we interact, work and live help us to dialogue better. Do we truly communicate with each other and with God?

3) **Personal:** Do the ways we interact, work and live respect individual dignity, promote personal competency, and avoid creating dependency?

4) **Spiritual:** Do the ways we interact, work and live anchor us in our faith in Jesus and, at the same time, move us beyond the comfortable so that we continue to grow?

5) **Adult:** Do we relate to one another as adults in our adult relationships?

6) **Honest:** Do the ways we live create a safe enough space for us to be honest with one another? Can we open up to others in an appropriate manner?

7) **Accountable:** Are we accountable to someone or some people? Are we generally trustworthy, consistent, committed and dependable?

I'm sure that each of us would be able to think of some more criteria. For the moment though let us reflect on how we live these criteria in our different relationships. As we do so, let us recognize the areas that in which we need to make improvements. Once we do that, let us figure out how to make those improvements.

We begin by remembering the importance of taking care of ourselves as individuals. As we approach our different relationships, we bring to them who we are with all

that we are. As human beings, although we are a unified being, there are several very important aspects that make us who we are.

We are physical beings. As physical beings we are our bodies and our bodies are us. St. Paul reminds us that our bodies are to be treated as temples. All of us can probably do better in taking care of our physical selves.

We are spiritual beings. Just as the our spirit needs our body, without attention to the spiritual dimension of our lives we become like empty shells. Again, all of us can do better in making sure that we *make* (not find) enough time in our day for God and that spiritual dimension.

We are intellectual beings. Our minds are wonderful things; what a gift we have received! It is a worthwhile and fulfilling task to make sure that we remain current in our changing world. It demands time and effort, but it's important. I can't remember where I heard it, but I remember it being said that, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." Sometimes the stuff that we take in from the TV and other outside sources is an insult to our intelligence. Too often we sit passively by (and let our children sit passively by), and let ourselves (and our children) become desensitized to what previously we might have held in high esteem.

We are emotional beings. This most important dimension of our being is probably the one that needs the most attention. I believe that it is the foundation for the other three. When I am in a state of emotional well-being I will take care of myself and do what is necessary to try and maintain that life-giving balance in my life. We all need to be able to express what is in our hearts: the pleasant and the joyful; the painful and the sorrowful. Parents and those who take care of children have so much influence (positive or negative) in this area of a child's development. In order to convey that feeling of self-worth and value to children, it is necessary that we recognize our own personal worth and value.

The more that we can be grounded in the above, the more interaction there will be and the greater chance for more and more people to participate in our life. I continue to see our Faith Community with a great potential to be an even more dynamic presence and power. And because we are more than just spiritual beings, as a Church Community we must pay attention to all the dimensions that make us up as human beings. This will be a key element in our success with regard to the *Road to Renewal*. As Jesus addressed the whole person and took care of the whole person, we too must follow his example and incorporate these dimensions and dynamics in the ordinary things that we do every day.

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