

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



You have heard of Original Sin, right? But have you heard of ‘Original Loneliness’? This term was used by St. John Paul II in his Theology of the Body. Even if we have never heard of it, we have experienced it. The disquiet, the unease, the knowing that something is lacking, some void that has yet to be filled.

Some of the busiest people are lonely. You can be in a room filled with people and be alone. You can live in an apartment block, in the midst of a great crowd, and feel completely isolated. You can be married, or have many siblings and feel that no one understands you.

A week ago I was at a gathering in the presence of Cardinal Tobin, and he told a joke: “There was a funeral and nobody came to pray at the wake, but there was a sign in the funeral home next to the casket, which read “He had 5000 friends on Facebook”!”

Technology of course in and of itself is not bad. Indeed Pope Benedict encouraged the use of social media and technology, as a means of evangelization.

Smart phones, I-phones, texts, Apps, Skype, Facetime, Snapchat, E-mail, Instagram, voicemail and tweets; the means of communication continue to multiply. Today we seemingly have no excuse to be alone.

And yet for all this, the Original Loneliness, remains.

Last Friday morning I was at Tice’s Corner in Woodcliff Lake. I saw a line of 120 people (I counted them) waiting to get into the Apple store, presumably to purchase the new I-Phone X, on its release date. It struck me that none of these people spoke to each other; every single one of them had their head down, glued to their phones.

Our social network, our number of friends or contacts, can oftentimes serve only to reinforce the loneliness which is experienced. The more we connect, the greater our social network, the more we can become aware of the experience of Loneliness.

Saint John Paul II said that Original Loneliness is not a flaw, it is not a mistake; it has been purposefully placed there, within us, in our heart, our soul, our being, by the same God who created us out of love. We have been created in this way by a God who knows very well what is going on in the depth of our heart:

“It’s not good that man be alone” the Book of Genesis tells us. Original Loneliness was there “In the Beginning” of creation, before the Fall.

This Loneliness is a preparation, St. John Paul II tells us, for us to be in relationship with Someone. No person, no friend, no spouse, no brother or sister, cousin uncle or aunt, no roommate in college, no buddy on a sports team, no friend at the gym, no work-mate, no BFF is able to substitute for this Someone. The Loneliness we experience has been placed there by Him who knows and loves us. It can be the catalyst for our seeking Him, for our be-finding Him, for our espousing Him, the only One who is able to answer the need of our heart.

He can’t be found on Facebook or the cell phone; He does not have a user name on the computer. But He can be found here at the liturgy this weekend. Those who meet Him are never alone, regardless of who they are with or how many people are around them.