

Smoky Mountain Reflections #155

Happy New Year!

As we get this year started, I would like to encourage you all to not make a New Year's resolution. Instead, be about the business of serving God and neighbor because of your gratitude for His great gift of salvation and because your neighbor needs to be loved by you for God.

I would like to propose that you do this in three simple ways: Engage, Discern, and Speak.

First let's engage. Live the life you have been blessed with in a productive proactive way that has you interacting with your family, coworkers or fellow students, friends and neighbors. Do not make this a project; instead make it a life style choice. Choose to eat meals at the family table whenever possible, not in front of the TV. Choose to have face to face conversations instead of electronic ones whenever possible. Choose to make a deliberate effort to look for opportunities to spend a little time actually talking to your neighbor. When you are communicating electronically, choose to make an extra effort to be kind and thankful when texting, tweeting, e-mailing or talking on the phone. You cannot share your faith in your home at work or at school or in your neighborhood if you are not having regular conversations with people. So unplug from that regular one way radio, tv or ipod, use and have some two way conversations. You may even find out through such conversations that there is some way that you can be of service to your neighbor.

Next do a little discerning. Spend time in God's word so that you can clearly tell right from wrong. In an age where we are always speaking about the infamous gray area, where we are unsure what is right or wrong, take the time to get a sound Biblical answer to such questions when you come across them. Read His word. With digital versions of scripture abounding it is easy to find text that addresses your question. Pray for guidance. If we diligently seek His will in all things He will not let us down. Get fed regularly, with daily devotions, regular fellowship, Bible study, and of course fed by Word and Sacrament fellowship weekly. Also add regular rest, to be still and know that He is God.

Finally speak up, Have the courage to speak the truth in love when you are having all those conversations and you find someone God has called you to love has a hard question to deal with. Take the time to help them find a good Biblical answer to whatever that sticky problem may be. If you find yourself unable to help with such an answer I offer myself as your own personal pastoral advisor, ready to help you find good answers to life's tough questions.

So Engage, Discern, and Speak in 2015 and the Lord will be at your side all the way

Blessed New Year
In Christ
Pastor Portier