

This past week David Brooks wrote a column in the New York Times about a book written in 1911 called *Autobiography of an Elderly Woman*. Brooks was so impressed with the remarkable description of what old age was like a century ago that it was shocking when he discovered that the author was a young woman speaking in the voice of her mother. But the line he quoted that caught my attention and which I thought was especially well put was this: Very soon your children slip from between your fingers. They develop new traits that you don't understand and others that you understand only too well, for, like weeds, your faults come up and refuse to be rooted out ...

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I think growing older and seeing the consequences of your shortcomings flourish like weeds in the lives of those we love is certainly a strong motivation to become better quality people. We may have great possessions, we may have great achievements, we may make a great impression on others, but what sort of quality do we possess in our own eyes? In the eyes of God?

People often say, "you can't change human nature." But as J. B. Phillips points out in his little volume entitled "The Good News," the whole reason why Christianity is good news is the assertion that your human nature and my human nature can be transformed. And the transformation comes not because we suddenly abide by better rules and regulations, but because we have an inward change of loyalty.

As long as a life remains self-centered and governed by the dominant values of this world, there is little hope of transformation – there is little hope of greater courage, faith, love, and kindness. Those qualities grow only in the garden of a heart whose loyalty is focused on God.

Allow me to quote Phillips:

What we really need is someone to believe in, someone to command our adult love, loyalty, respect and worship. We need to get to know the one who is in charge of Life, so that we can co-operate with his purpose. All this remains vague and beyond our reach until we accept the infinite God focused in the person of Jesus Christ. In him we find not only the highest possible quality of living, but we find that if we transfer our faith from ourselves to him that we begin to understand God, we begin to see something of the purpose of God and our part in that purpose.... We find that through Christ the resources of God can be tapped and, incredible as it may sound, something of God's own quality of living becomes available for us... By faith in God revealed in Christ we can find a permanent and effective improvement in the quality of our living. This has been proved times without number and it is Good News!

If we hope to stop planting the weeds of our faults and sins in the next generation, we have a wonderful opportunity this morning for we have shared in the sacrament that Jesus prepared for us in his Last Supper. And now we have a decision to make. We can either remain mindful of the actions, images, and meaning of this sacrament in the week ahead,

or we can leave it behind and plunge head first into all the challenges and distractions of life on our own.

In the sacrament Christ asks one thing of us – to remember him. I pray that in the days ahead we take that remembrance with us and meditate upon the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord. I pray that it works in us something good, deepening our communion with Christ, with God, with one another. I pray that in ways great and small the grace of God plants seeds of righteousness in our lives, and so weeds of our faults do not flourish and do not take root in the lives of those we love and those of a new generation entrusted to our care and keeping.