

## How Much Should One Forgive?

A frail black woman stands slowly to her feet. She is over seventy years of age. Facing her across the court room are several white security officers, one of whom, Mr. Van de Broek, has just been tried and found implicated in the murders of both the woman's son and husband some years before.

It was indeed Mr. Van de Broek, it has been established, and who had come into the woman's home many years back, had taken her son, shot him at point-blank range and then burned the young man's body on a fire while he and his officers held a party. Seven years later Van de Broek and his cohorts had returned to take away her husband as well. For many months she heard nothing of his whereabouts. Then almost two years after her husband's disappearance, Van de Broek came back to fetch the woman herself. How vividly she remembers that evening, going to a place beside a river, where she was shown her husband, bound and beaten but still strong in spirit, lying on a pile of wood. The last words she heard from his lips, as the officer poured gasoline over his body and set him aflame, were 'Father, forgive them.'

And now the woman stands in the courtroom and listens to the confession offered by Mr. Van de Broek. A member of the commission turns to her and asks, 'So, what do you want? How can justice be done to this man who has so brutally destroyed your family?' '

I want three things" began the woman, calmly but confidently. 'I want first to be taken to the place where my husband's body was burned so that I can gather the dust and give his remains a decent burial.' She pauses, and then continues, 'My husband and son were my only family. I want secondly, therefore, for Mr. Van de Broek to become my son. I would like him to come twice a month to the ghetto and spend time with me so that I can pour out on him whatever love I have remaining within me.

'And finally,' she says, 'I want a third thing. I would like Mr. Van de Broek to know that I offer him my forgiveness because Jesus Christ died to forgive. This was also the wish of my husband. And so, I would kindly ask someone to come to my side and lead me across the courtroom so that I can take Mr. Van de Broek in my arms, embrace him and let him know he is truly forgiven.

As the court assistant comes to lead the elderly woman across the room, Mr. Van de Broek, overwhelmed by what he has just heard, faints. And as he does

those in the courtroom - friends, family and neighbors, who were all victims of decades of oppression and injustice - begin to sing softly the great hymn, 'Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me...'

*The story is one of Nelson Mandela's from "The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission"*

# **WORKSHOP ON VOCATION APOSTOLATE**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

At St Joseph's Regional Seminary, Hyderabad, long ago, a workshop on "vocations" was held meant for the Seminarians, priests and religious working in the Vocational Apostolate. On that occasion they prepared some short position papers which inspired me to edit the notes herewith

The special feature of this on vocation workshop is that the sessions are based on "case studies" as triggers for the discussions and inputs that would follow. In that way, the participants were encouraged to get involved in the discussions, sharings and deliberations from the start of the sessions. The input or talk of the moderator would always crown end of the sessions.

Actually speaking, the work of the moderator will be only to organize, verbalize and systematize the ideas brought up by the participants.

## **AIMS OF THIS WORKSHOP:**

- ✓ *To clarify ideas and concepts about vocation and vocations.*
- ✓ *To help the participants to discern their vocation.*
- ✓ *To create among the participants a "sense of vocation or call".*
- ✓ *All Christians — without exception — are called by Christ.*

## **TARGET AUDIENCE:**

- *Primarily Youth, (SSC Class, Higher Secondary, College and Working Youth*
- *Those thinking of joining the Priestly and Religious Life*
- *Prenovices, Preseminarians, Postulants,*
- *Novices and Seminarians*
- *All Christian audiences.*

## **USES OF THESE NOTES:**

- ✓ *Vocational Workshops.*
- ✓ *Vocation Camps.*
- ✓ *Catechesis on Vocation.*
- ✓ *Sunday Schools for senior students.*
- ✓ *Prenovitiate Programmes.*
- ✓ *Vocation days and other vocational events in Schools and Parishes.*
- ✓ *Discussion Groups on Vocation and Vocations.*
- ✓ *Talks, Sermons and Lecturettes on Vocation.*

## **SUGGESTIONS:**

*You may complement the materials offered in these notes with some activities like role-plays, essay writing competitions, bible study classes, visits to seminaries, noviciates and religious houses.*

*Each session will easily fill up two hours. With a few additions like, role-plays, etc. it can easily will fill a half day or even more..*

decades of oppression and injustice - begin to sing softly the great hymn,  
'Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me...'

The story is one of Nelson Mandela's from "The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission"