

# Unconditional love can heal

Among the numerous challenging things that Jesus said were his words in Luke 6:41: “Why do you notice the splinter in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the beam in your own eye.”

In a commentary on that passage, Paul Pennick wrote: “A few years back I heard stories of people moving out of pews in Catholic churches to avoid sitting next to a man or woman who was divorced. I never saw this happen, and I certainly hope it was rare when it did. Nowadays divorce is so common that, if this kind of behavior were the norm, Sunday liturgies would see people in constant motion in search of a pew untouched by people from failed marriages.

This Gospel passage is not about the pain of divorce. It’s about hypocrisy and judging others. It’s about having acute awareness of other people’s failings, while ignoring our own. Although we may not be among the seat changers, we need to think about that beam in our eye, and forget about the splinters we see elsewhere. And remember, EVERY pew is filled with sinners.”

What Paul might have added is that the Gospels tell us that: “Jesus loved sinners and ate and drank with them!” We are not loved because we are perfect. We are loved precisely because each of us is broken, and only love, unconditional love, can heal us.

If you would like an experience of a day of unconditional love, then I would like to invite you to join me and a few hundred other folks at Loyola University in Columbia, 8890 McGaw Road, 21045 on April 17.

I play a humble role in the day. I will give one workshop (11:25 a.m.-12:40 p.m.) titled: “Transform Your Thoughts – Transform Your Life.” I will also be the main celebrant at the closing Mass at the end of the day. If you have heard me speak before, please consider choosing one of the other workshops at that time.

The title of the day is: “Flourish – Don’t Flounder.” (The title sounded a bit “fishy” to me (pun intended). Yet, there is indeed quite a menu of opportunities for anyone who is single again as a result of separation, death or divorce. Yes, there are

different issues for those who are widowed than those who are separated or divorced. But there are also many issues in common such as feelings of fear and guilt and anxiety and anger and inadequacy and so on.

Monsignor Tillman will lead the opening prayer. Dottie Levesque and Carrie Hansen, nationally known healers and heroes of the Single Again Ministry will give the keynote address at 9:20 a.m.

The workshops include: "Forget the Drama - Try a Healthy Relationship" by Carrie Hanse; "Theology of the Body" by Phil Steinacker; "Annulments: Myth and Facts" by Franciscan Father Bill Graham; "Open the Door to Optimism" by Dr. Woodrow Powell; "Oops I Did It Again" by Barbara Shue Meighan and Jack Long; "Exploring Remarriage" by Carrie Hansen. "Know Yourself - Grow Yourself" by Rev. Dr. Cook-Johnson; "Growing Through Bereavement" by Dottie Levesque and "Isn't It Time To Give Back" by Trina Ridolfi.

Just reading this list, however, is like reading a menu and thinking we've eaten the meal! This day is more than the sum of its parts. While there are obviously people with special expertise, there are no "experts" in the sense of anyone being better than anyone else. We are all wounded healers. Our true credentials are our brokenness. And it is in our sharing that we express our caring. We believe that it was love that brought God into this world to die and rise. And it will be only love that moves us beyond the grave to the empty tomb, beyond death to life, beyond fear to trust.

Please tell as many people as you can about this day. E-mail questions to [SingleAgainConference@yahoo.com](mailto:SingleAgainConference@yahoo.com). Download additional registration forms and view map at <https://www.ConferenceInColumbia.Itgo> or call Mary Ann 410-485-8313.