
SESSION 2

Based on Episode 2 | Helen

Synopsis of the Episode

Christina receives a suspended two year sentence for falsely claiming her mother's pension. Fr Michael is visited by someone called Roz who has defrauded her boss of £200,000 and thinks she will be found out, so intends to commit suicide. We also meet Helen, and her son Vernon. Vernon is mentally ill but due to a shortage of beds is released from the care facility in which he currently lives back into the care of his mother. He becomes very disturbed and Helen calls Fr Michael for help, but it is late and he is tired so he doesn't answer the phone but he does hear the message she left. When he doesn't answer, Helen calls the mental health team who in turn send the police. At the end of the confrontation between them, Vernon is shot and killed.

Suggested Bible Passage

Luke 10.25-37

Suicide and Gambling

The conversation between Fr Michael and Roz had numerous strands but two stand out. Roz had stolen £200,000 from her work in order to gamble on the machines in the betting office. Fr Michael tried to help Roz see that she was a victim of these machines.

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- Do you agree?
 - Does calling someone 'a victim' free them from the responsibility of their own crime?
 - What would you have said to Roz, if she had told her story to you?
 - If someone told you they were going to kill themselves, like Roz did, what would you do?
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On Being There

In conversation Father Michael revealed that he felt guilty about not picking up the phone to Vernon's mother. In the episode it is clear that this is because he was tired and had issues of his own.

- When Jesus said at the end of the parable of the Good Samaritan: 'Go and do likewise' do you think he meant do likewise always, to everyone you meet, every time they are in need? Or are there limits? Should you sometimes say no? How should you decide when to help and when not to?
 - Is Fr. Michael right to feel guilty about not answering the phone this time?
 - In response to Fr Michael's anxiety and wondering about whether he should tell Helen that he heard the message but didn't pick up, the other priest (Fr Peter Flaherty) said 'What she doesn't know can't hurt her', do you agree?
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Prayer

A small but powerful scene in this episode features Fr Michael talking about prayer. He described, as a child watching a falconer whose hawk had disappeared. The falconer stayed where he was but every half an hour he called out 'come on boy.' He remains confident that the hawk would come back. Then after 4-5 hours he was right, and the hawk did come. Fr Michael's conclusion from this was that God doesn't always come when you call but keep on calling and he will come.

- Is this your experience of prayer?
 - What can we learn about prayer from this?
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Closing Prayer

Spend some time in prayer. If you feel comfortable this could be a time of open prayer or you could use the biddings and prayer below. bidding:

We pray for those who have no choice but to face up to the consequences of their actions...

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

For those can see no way out of the mess that they are in...

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

For those who are grieving the loss of a loved one...

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

When evil darkens our world, give us light.

When despair numbs our souls, give us hope.

When we stumble and fall, lift us up.

When doubts assail us, give us faith.

When nothing seems sure, give us trust.

When ideals fade, give us vision.

When we lose our way, be our guide!

That we may find serenity in Your presence, and purpose in doing Your will.

Amen

John D. Rayner

