
SESSION 6

Based on Episode 6 | Father Michael

Synopsis of the Episode

Fr Michael's flashbacks build to an unbearable point and he decides that he will resign as a Priest after his mother's death. In the midst of this, he tries to help Roz's children cope in the aftermath of their mother's death. Chloe, overwhelmed with anger, took a sledge hammer to the gambling machines that caused her mother's debt. The betting shop manager forgave her but she then did it again. Fr Michael, worried that she would be arrested but agreeing with her anger incites his parishioners to smash the machines too. At Vernon's inquest, Andrew decides to tell the truth about what happened and Fr Michael also confesses that he had heard Helen's message. Fr Michael's mother dies and at her funeral many of the people whom he had helped thank him for what he had done.

Suggested Bible Passage

John 2.13-16

Justice and Forgiveness

In this episode, Fr Michael links justice firmly with forgiveness saying that he would not forgive people who do not ask to be forgiven or who are lying to cover up what they have done. He says: 'First give me truth and justice and I will think about forgiveness'.

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- Do you think there can ever be forgiveness without justice?
 - What happens to people who never receive justice? Will they ever be able to forgive?
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Righteous Anger (again)

In a return of the theme of righteous anger from last week, Fr Michael declared Chloe's anger to be 'righteous' and even encouraged his parishioners to join her in her campaign.

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- What did you decide about righteous anger last week?
 - Have you changed your mind at all this week?

- Do you think Fr Michael was right, wrong, or a little bit of both?
 - Is there anything that makes you as angry as the betting machines made him?
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It's a Wonderful life?

In Sarah Hughes' review of Broken in Guardian, she called this series 'TV's unmissable answer to It's a Wonderful Life.' She explains that, though much grittier than the iconic Christmas film, Fr Michael discovers the ways he has touched so many lives.

- Do you agree?
 - What lessons have you learned as a result of your reflections on this series?
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A Good Ending?

Some people loved the ending to the series; others felt that at the end it parted from its usual gritty style and produced a 'happy ever after' ending.

What do you think? Was it the right ending or not?

p.s.

One of the powerful features of this series is the way it captures how hard it can be for people in ministry and how much Fr Michael needed to hear the support of his parishioners. In the week that follows, perhaps you would like to think of someone, lay or ordained, who has ministered profoundly to you and thank them for what they have done...

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:

We pray for all those who cry out for justice....

Lord, hear us

Lord, graciously hear us.

For those who work so hard to bring that justice into our world ...

Lord, hear us

Lord, graciously hear us.

For all those who, in trying to make a difference, feel discouraged and are ready to give up...

Lord, hear us

Lord, graciously hear us.

Disturb us, Lord, when
We are too well pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true
Because we have dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely
Because we sailed too close to the shore.
Disturb us, Lord, when
With the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst
For the waters of life;
Having fallen in love with life,
We have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth,
We have allowed our vision
Of the new Heaven to dim.
Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,
To venture on wider seas
Where storms will show your mastery;
Where losing sight of land,
We shall find the stars.
We ask You to push back
The horizons of our hopes;
And to push into the future
In strength, courage, hope, and love. **Amen**

Anonymous, variously attributed to among others Francis Drake.

