

LIFE Meeting

Life Struggles

December 11, 2013

1. Opening Prayer

Laszlo

2. Large Group PPT

Hannah, John, Victoria

3. Small Group

4. Personal Reflection

Stephen

5. Closing Prayer

Hannah

Next Meeting: January 8th

CORE Team:

- **Retreat December 22**
- **Topic: Right to Life**
- **New sign for phone bin**
- **PREPARE IDEAS FOR MEETING AND FOUNDERS WEEK**

Opening Prayer

Don McLean

American Pie

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLGKgJ7pL9o>

A long, long time ago...
I can still remember
How that music used to make me smile
And I knew if I had my chance
That I could make those people dance
And, maybe, they'd be happy for a
while

But February made me shiver
With every paper I'd deliver
Bad news on the doorstep;
I couldn't take one more step

I can't remember if I cried
When I read about his widowed bride
But something touched me deep inside
The day the music died

[Hook]
So bye-bye, Miss American Pie
Drove my Chevy to the levee
But the levee was dry
And them good old boys were drinkin'
whiskey in Rye
Singin', "This'll be the day that I die
"This'll be the day that I die."

Did you write the book of love
And do you have faith in God above
If the Bible tells you so
Do you believe in rock 'n roll
Can music save your mortal soul
And can you teach me how to dance
real slow

Well, I know that you're in love with him
'cause I saw you dancin' in the gym
You both kicked off your shoes
Man, I dig those rhythm and blues

I was a lonely teenage broncin' buck

With a pink carnation and a pickup
truck
But I knew I was out of luck
The day the music died

[Hook]

Now for ten years we've been on our
own
And moss grows fat on a rollin' stone
But that's not how it used to be
When the jester sang for the king and
queen
In a coat he borrowed from James
Dean
And a voice that came from you and
me

Oh, and while the king was looking
down
The jester stole his thorny crown
The courtroom was adjourned;
No verdict was returned
And while Lennon read a book on Marx
The quartet practiced in the park
And we sang dirges in the dark
The day the music died

[Hook]

You may be thinking that this song is actually more about the Rock'n'Roll than life struggles. But for me it will always be a song that reminds me of the great things I've got in life when I really feel down. And I happened to experience these feelings during this semester more than ever before.

As most of you know I'm "the foreign" this year in Gross. This time last year I had no idea that I would be a student here. But my teacher asked me if I wanted to be part of a Catholic exchange program in the US. My first reaction was "hahh there's a problem, I don't know English". The real reason was more complicated.

To make a long story short; to come here, I have had to leave behind all my friends, my awesome classmates for their Senior year of HS, my 4 beloved siblings, my parents alone at home, actually everything I was familiar with before - for what? For the.. uncertain, with the scary understanding that things will never be quite the same again by the time I go back. Was it worth it? This has been a question that sometimes makes me unsure.

I'm sure everyone had the situation when you felt that there's too much on you, you are overwhelmed, you thought there's no way of getting out, no one can help you. Or you thought it would be just so much easier to quit and stay inside your comfort zone. Unfortunately, that ain't gonna help.

Here's what I did. I kept praying, trusting in God's unpredictable ways, and I opened myself to others and to new things.

On the last day I spent among my family before the airplane took off, my siblings performed this song with different lyrics specially written for me. So that song helps me to reflect on what I've got. Because when you feel unsatisfied, uncomfortable, and lost, it is just because you can't value the things you do have.

Let's pray to God to help us seeing this bright side when we are struggling and want to quit.

[This was supposed to be scripture. There is no scripture. So please say this prayer with your small group]

O God, give me an open mind. A mind ready to receive and to welcome new knowledge in the ways that you may reveal it to me. Let the past never be so dear to me as to set a limit the future. Give me courage to change my mind, when that is needed. Let me be tolerant to the thoughts of others and hospitable to ideas that come to me through them. Amen.

Please discuss with your group the various scenarios. While some options are given please feel free to develop other ways of reacting to the ethical situation given to your group.

Scenario 1

Ethical Situation:

You are hanging out with your friends and they are referring to things being “gay” and “retarded” The banter of the conversation is clearly lighthearted (funny).

What could you do in this situation?

Your options:

1. Laugh and go along with the conversation.
2. Just leave the room and let it go.
3. Speak up. Using words like that is unacceptable and certainly not funny.
4. What other options are there?

Points to discuss:

- Does it matter that they are just joking around? To your knowledge, there aren't any gay/lesbian people or mentally retarded people hanging out with you.
- Is it rude or impolite to correct people when they are just joking around?
- Should you keep quiet because you are in the minority and it is not that big of deal?
- Has this ever happened with your friends?

Scenario 2

Ethical Situation:

You have noticed that one of your close friends has begun to distance himself from you and your friend group. He no longer hangs out with you on the weekend and has seemed to have lost interest in school. You finally confront him alone on the issue, and he tells you that he believes he is depressed and has been thinking about suicide. He feels he can't talk to his parents and doesn't know how to deal with the situation. He says he wants to keep this just between you and him.

What could you do in this situation?

Your options:

1. Talk with him on a regular basis to make sure he is okay.
2. Immediately get his family involved.
3. Go to a trusted teacher or guidance counselor.
4. No matter what you choose to do, something still needs to be said. What would you say?
5. What other choices are there?

Points to discuss:

- Teenage suicide is a real and this needs serious attention.
- Who would you get involved
 - A Teacher?
 - A Counselor?
 - Parent?
- Is this a cry for a help or a sincere threat?
- Is there a difference between the two?

Scenario 3

Ethical Situation:

You have a female friend whom you have known for some time. She is attractive, outgoing, and likes to take social risks. While you are at a party you notice she has been drinking and is starting to flirt with several guys you know.

What could you do in this situation?

Your options:

1. Call her parents and get her out of there.
2. Talk to her. Get her to stop drinking and let her know it could be a regrettable moment if she continues to drink and flirt.
3. Talk to the guys and tell them she has been drinking and they would be taking advantage of her.
4. Say nothing. The social stigma of interrupting wouldn't be worth the trouble.
5. Other options?

Points to discuss:

- Should you consider who the guys are in this scenario?
- Is there any "real danger" in this scenario?
- Should you keep quiet?
- Has this ever happened in your life?

Scenario 4

Ethical Situation:

You have a loved one who is terminally ill. This illness will cause a slow and painful death. Medication, while relieving pain, does nothing to stop the illness and robs them of the mental awareness. Furthermore, it prolongs the inevitable death. Your family is meeting to discuss options.

What could you do in this situation?

Your options:

1. You voice to your family that everyone has the right to maintain their dignity, even in death. Medication should be stopped so that the end of life can begin.
2. Life should be protected and prolonged for as long as possible. Miracles do happen.
3. What other options are there?

Points to discuss:

- Does your family consider the wishes of the loved one?
- Does your family consider the teaching of the Church?
- Should you keep quiet because you are young and this is an adult situation?
- Has this ever happened in your family?

Scenario 5

Ethical Situation:

Your friend and you have been great friends ever since you were young. You grew up together, went to the same grade school and are now attending Gross together. When you came here, you noticed that you were placed in different classes and barely see each other around school, the only times you really get to talk is during lunch and after school. You've noticed that you and your friend have started to become distant, and you see your friend starting to hang out with different people. You barely see each other on the weekends now, and you even begin to be excluded from things that your good friend is doing because she is hanging out with her "new" friends. How would you react?

What could you do in this situation?

Your options:

1. Do nothing because you have your own group of "new" friends/you think nothing of the distance created
2. Confront him at school/outside of school, demanding that she stops hanging out with the new crowd
3. Politely talk to her, ask her if they would start including you because you don't want to be left behind
4. Other options

Points to discuss:

- Is this realistic? You've known someone for all this time and such a distance can come between you?
- Has this happened to you at Gross ?
- Has this happened to you with a friend that doesn't go to Gross ? Meaning, you have replaced old friends with new ones.

Scenario 6

Ethical Situation:

Your friend has confided in you that he is “sexually confused.” In fact, he goes so far as to say he is more attracted to men than to women. Furthermore, he is worried about telling his family and friends because he does not want people to treat him differently

What could you do in this situation?

Your options:

1. Avoid your friend. Totally uncomfortable with homosexuality.
2. Support your friend. What does that mean?
3. Ridicule him because others will assume you are also gay if you do not.
4. What other options are there?

Points to discuss:

- What your view of homosexuality?
- Does this alter your feelings on homosexuality?
- Does this alter your feelings about your friend?
- How do treat this information?
- Has this ever happened in your life?

Scenario 7

Ethical Situation:

There is one teacher who you and many of your classmates have who is often labeled a "terrible teacher". Although you get good grades in the class and can tell the teacher is trying many of your peers take advantage of the teacher's lack of discipline and "mess around" in the class, causing distractions and problems with the teacher. It has gotten to the point that the teacher is noticeably unenthusiastic and constantly irritated with having to battle the class.

What could you do in this situation?

Your options:

1. Just carry on in class by not participating in the harassing of the teacher. It is an easy grade and who cares about a teacher who can't control the class?
2. Befriend the teacher so that he/she knows not everyone in the class behaves in such a way.
3. Approach the students in the class about their behavior. This could lead to the behavior ending, but you would risk the possibility of social repercussions.
4. Involve your parents or an administrator. They are paying for the class that is being disrupted. Would this lead to larger issues for the teacher?
5. What other choices are there?

Points to discuss:

- How is this relevant in your experience at Gross ?
- Some of your peers blame the teacher for lack of authority in the class room. Is this true or is it a problem with the students?
- What are the impacts of this situation on both the student (this is their education) and the teacher (this is their **career**)

Scenario 8

Ethical Situation:

You have a boyfriend you have been with for a few months. The relationship got pretty serious pretty quickly. You have talked about sex and he has said that he is willing to wait until you are ready. You have already said that you love each other, so you are starting to wonder what you are waiting for. While you are out one night with your friends they are telling you that there is no reason to wait since you love each other and he must really care since he said that he would wait.

What could you do in this situation?

Your options:

1. Keep waiting. If this is the real thing it is worth waiting for.
2. Sleep with your boyfriend. It is the next natural step in the relationship anyways.
3. Other options?

Points to discuss:

- Is it really a big deal to sleep with someone?
- How serious is it really with your boyfriend?
- Is this an ethical dilemma or a relationship issue?
- Has this ever happened in your life?

Closing Prayer

Avril Lavigne

Keep Holding On

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPBlil7NXUE>

You're not alone
Together we stand
I'll be by your side, you know I'll take your hand
When it gets cold
And it feels like the end
There's no place to go
You know I won't give in
No I won't give in

Keep holding on
'Cause you know we'll make it through, we'll
make it through
Just stay strong
'Cause you know I'm here for you, I'm here for
you
There's nothing you could say
Nothing you could do
There's no other way when it comes to the truth
So keep holding on
'Cause you know we'll make it through, we'll
make it through

So far away
I wish you were here
Before it's too late, this could all disappear
Before the doors close
And it comes to an end
With you by my side I will fight and defend
I'll fight and defend
Yeah, yeah

Keep holding on
'Cause you know we'll make it through, we'll
make it through
Just stay strong
'Cause you know I'm here for you, I'm here for
you
There's nothing you could say
Nothing you could do
There's no other way when it comes to the truth
So keep holding on
'Cause you know we'll make it through, we'll
make it through

Hear me when I say, when I say I believe
Nothing's gonna change, nothing's gonna
change destiny
Whatever's meant to be will work out perfectly
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

La da da da
La da da da

La da da da da da da da da

Keep holding on
'Cause you know we'll make it through, we'll
make it through
Just stay strong
'Cause you know I'm here for you, I'm here for
you
There's nothing you could say
Nothing you could do
There's no other way when it comes to the truth
So keep holding on
'Cause you know we'll make it through, we'll
make it through

Keep holding on
Keep holding on

There's nothing you could say
Nothing you could do
There's no other way when it comes to the truth
So keep holding on
'Cause you know we'll make it through, we'll
make it through

Thank you, Lord, for being there for me and allowing me to cry out to you in my times of need. It is amazing to me that the Lord of the Universe would take time to listen to me and to care about what I say. God, there are things happening around me right now that I do not understand. Some of these things make me feel weak, helpless and afraid. Even in the midst of this, I know that you are the Lord. I know that the situation is in Your hand, and I trust You. I beseech you for strength and for wisdom that I would be able to endure this situation and be able to handle it in a way that would bring glory to Your name. Lord, please just help me to keep holding on through these times of struggle and to always see you lighting the way. In Jesus' Name, Amen.