***How Do You Know How Much You’re Worth?***

Many years ago, I had the privilege of working with what was then called “Juvenile Delinquents.” Today we now have syndromes and disorders. These were boys who were sent to us by the Court system as an alternative to being in the State Corrections system.

The founder, a Saintly man, Bishop Robert H. Mize, founded the institution, then called “the St. Francis Boys’ Homes,” with a treatment mode that he simply called “Therapy in Christ.” These Homes had every strata of society, with boys who had committed every type of crime imaginable.

One boy had been dropped off at our Unit by parents who cried the entire time that they helped him move in; they were lovely people. Their son was a bitter young man, and my one-on-one counseling with him was nonproductive. In Group counseling he was mute. One day in individual counseling, he blurted out “my parents hated me.” I attempted to reconcile what he said with the image I had seen when he entered the Unit with his parents. After several minutes of non-aggressive probing (I was a Rogerian in those days) he said, “Why did they leave me?” I, of course, pointed out that they had not “left” him, and that they prevented him from being incarcerated in a State Institution by bringing him to St. Francis Homes. He said, “I’m not talkin’ about them.” Now I was baffled. The reality was that he had been adopted by the lovely couple whom he called “Mom” and “Dad.” He had spent years being furious with the parents he did not remember, whom he saw as bringing him into the world and then abandoning him. Sadly, he had taken out his anger of abandonment on the world into which he was born and onto the parents who had attempted to rescue him from that world.

After being unsuccessful in utilizing every method I had learned in the numerous courses in undergraduate and graduate psychology, I blurted out, “Hey kid, do you know how much money your adoptive parents paid for you?” Suddenly I had his attention. He said, “How much?” With a degree of frustration, I told him about attorney’s fees, and all of the expenses related to an adoption, and I gave him an estimated “bottom line” figure. He said with a smile I will never forget, “You mean I’m worth that much?”

He became a model resident and was released within the year.

Sometimes we vent onto the wrong people when we are filled with pain, and it can become misdirected anger. But Jesus understands. He has adopted us as His children, and He was willing to pay the price on Good Friday for His adopted children. The next time you look at a Crucifix you may wish to remember the boy in this story, and with him you may wish to say to Jesus, **“You mean I’m worth that much?”**