

Priests TV series aims to put passion in faith

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Father Cedric Pisegna, C. P.

Houston, Texas, Feb 11, 2012 / 04:05 pm (CNA).- Father Cedric Pisegna, C.P., says the latest season of his television show aims to help people examine their lives and to experience the new life of forgiveness that Jesus offers.

“I’m trying to get people to live with passion, with enthusiasm, with energy. I want people to develop their relationship with God. I want them to grow in virtue, holiness and character. I want them to realize their potential to develop what they can be.”

“My prayer for all is that they will live with passion,” he told CNA in a Feb. 1 interview.

Fr. Pisegna, who currently lives in Houston, has been a priest for about 20 years and a professed Passionist for 26 years. He is the author of 15 books and has been broadcasting on television for six years.

His television program “Live with Passion” airs on and on some EWTN affiliates and on several major networks including the Trinity Broadcasting Network’s The Church Channel.

The upcoming season includes two shows with musician John Michael Talbot. It will broadcast from various places like San Antonio, New Orleans and Jacksonville, Tenn.

“I talk about loneliness, making good choices, the meaning of aging. There’s a whole variety of different topics.”

He said the upcoming season of Lent is a time for Christians to be introspective and to take a look at their lives.

“Where are we straying from the will of God? Do I have any bad habits, any sin in my life? It’s about making a turn. Conversion is ongoing, too. It’s constantly a theme in the Scriptures that we are invited to surrender ourselves to the will of God.”

Fr. Pisegna’s television programs reflect his desire to reach out to those who are not going to church, to young people, and to “fallen away” Catholics.

“I’m trying to help them come back,” he said.

“My message (for them) would be that Jesus can help you and save you and bring you new life and forgiveness. You can experience rebirth. He is the answer to all of our questions and our needs. For any emptiness that you feel, that cosmic loneliness, Jesus is the one who came to bring you new life.”

Fr. Pisegna said he draws on his own life experience to bring his message of change to others.

Originally from Springfield, Mass., the priest fell away from religious practice in his teen years after confirmation.

While he was attending college at the University of Massachusetts, he began to pray, to read the Bible, and to seek God in his life after the “pain and emptiness” he felt at the end of his relationship with a woman.

At the age of 19, he had what he characterized as a “near death experience.”

“I left my body, I had that sensation of going through a tunnel, I came before the light of God, and God spoke to me. What God said to me was I needed to change, I needed to be justified, that my life was not turning out well.

“He told me that he loved me, that he would protect me. I came back to my body changed. I became a Catholic priest, and the rest is history,” he told CNA.

His bestselling book “Death: A Final Surrender” talks about what happens after we die.

“We will all go and stand before God, and God is very gracious and loving, but he is certainly the God of second and third chances. That’s exactly what I got in my life.

“This has really colored my theology. It’s colored my life experience, and certainly changed my life.”

The priest made a special appeal to those who need second chances in life.

“God is there for you. No matter what you’ve done in your past, God will forgive you, if you simply come in humility, come in surrender. And God will give you another chance.

“That is what the Gospel is all about. Jesus really reached out, not so much to the religious people, but he reached out to those who are broken, hurting, the poor, the marginalized. And he gave them a new chance.

Fr. Pisegna cited Jesus’ own words: “I’ve not come for the healthy, but for the sick.”

His website, www.frcedric.org, lists airtimes for his television show as well as information about his books. It also contains his daily blog and links to his Facebook page.