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1. I would count myself among the 57 percent of Americans who believe that religion can answer the problems our world is facing today. But I add right up front that the solutions are not quick and easy ones. A problem that has to first be addressed is our society desire for a quick and simple solution where I don't have to change anything.
2. Before any of these contemporary problems can be addressed each of us must first ask ourselves how we might be contributing to the problem. There can be no true buy-in on the part of believers if we expect others to make the sacrifices necessary to bring about a change. I am not saying that the whole solution lies with individuals but it has to begin there.
3. In my Catholic faith tradition we speak of the Seven Deadly Sins. One of them is Greed. How does my desire to accumulate things affect my brothers and sisters who are without the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing? I am afraid that most of us do not know the difference between "want" and "need". In our society if I want it, it automatically becomes a need for me. This calls for some real soul searching. How does my desire for things effect the global economy and the climate issues of our day?
4. How much violence in our world comes from mistrust and lack of understanding of the other! Part of the solution is for individuals to try to understand where someone of a different race, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation is coming from. Then we can engage in real dialogue and barriers can be torn down as we recognize we are all sisters and brothers of a common Father.
5. As a Christian I am asked to pray for my enemy. I believe that prayer changes the Pray-er. Can I begin to see in the one called enemy what God sees in them - His own dear daughter or son. This prayer can effect how I approach the issue of war and violence.
6. One individual can make a difference but if all believers began to ask how am I part of the problem and move from there to how can I be part of the solution we can truly begin to address the issues. But all of this takes a willingness to sacrifice for the common good.