

HOMILY 15TH SUN OT YRB 2018

I came across a quote this week from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and I would like to share it with you today. “Do not ask is it safe? Is it politically correct? Is it popular? Ask is it right?” I think there is great wisdom in these words. As I listen to the news on the television and on talk radio I hear a lot of speculating. If this happens, these are the terrible things that might happen. However it is just speculation about things that probably will not happen and if they do we really do not know how things will turn out. Or we have not verified the facts but we are going to report it anyway. It does instill fear in people. I think all of this speculating brings about a lot of unnecessary fear that can paralyze us. The world becomes a place that is totally unsafe and that just is not true. I also hear a lot about what is politically correct. What will get me reelected? How will this affect the Republican or Democratic parties? How will this affect the upcoming elections? I also hear a lot about popularity. I hear a lot of polls indicating if people like or dislike certain actions or programs or policies. What I do not hear enough of is what is right? I think we could get a lot more accomplished if we talk more about that.

Today in the Gospel reading Jesus gives the 12 apostles a commission. He is giving all of us the same commission today. First of all he gives them power over unclean spirits. We have power over unclean spirits as well. The first step in exercising this power is to drive out our own unclean spirits, all of the things that are preventing you from doing what you know is right. It could be fear, wanting to be politically correct, wanting to be popular. There could be other things as well, so first ask yourself what is preventing me from doing what is right.

Next he sends them out to spread the Gospel to people who are receptive. I think we are all called to give more love, patience and non-judgmental compassion. He tells us to take nothing with us but a walking stick. He is telling us to be totally open to the people we come into contact with. He is calling us to open up our hearts to others and really connect with them on a personal level. How many

times to we prepare speeches to deliver to people? How often do we really listen to people or instead of listening are we preparing a rebuttal or a response? How many times do we jump to conclusions or judgments about people prematurely? I reserve time to meet with individuals each week. I will meet with anyone who wants to meet with me if they schedule an appointment and most of the time I have no idea what they want to talk about. Instead of trying to prepare and anticipate what they want to talk about, I am just really present to them and let things unfold. When people are open, share your faith with them. And if they are not receptive, shake the dust off your feet. Sometimes you will be rejected, but do not let that discourage you. If you know in your heart that you are doing what is right, that is what is really important. I don't think we ever regret doing what is right.

Jesus does tell us to take a walking stick to support us. What is the walking stick that we take with us to support us? It is Jesus. He is with us always and will help you if you open yourself up to him. I rely on Jesus, and if I am truly present to the other person, I will know what to say when the time comes. He also sends us out two by two. We need other people we can count on. We need a Parish family. We need to come here every weekend and reconnect with the community, receive the Eucharist, give glory and praise to God and be strengthened spiritually for the week ahead.

We heard in the second reading that God has chosen us to be his people. All of you have responded to God because you are all here! God is calling you to do what is right, not what is safe or politically correct or what is popular. This is not always easy; sometimes we need to push ourselves to do it. The Jewish people were the chosen people long before we were. There is a line from the movie *Fiddler on the Roof*. At one point Tevye looks to the sky and says: "It's true we are a chosen people. But once in a while can't you choose someone else?" You are all the chosen people. It is time to do what is right. It is time to spread the Gospel.