

**HOMILY ~ 15th SUNDAY  
IN ORDINARY TIME  
JULY 10/11, 2021**

It is really nice to be moving out of the pandemic and back into normalcy in our lives. Every weekend at Mass I see people that I have not seen for a long time. People tell me that they did not realize how much they missed coming to Mass until they get here. The streaming is better than nothing, but it definitely is not the same as coming to Mass. I also have watched people receive the Eucharist for the first time in many months. Many of them have tears in their eyes as they receive the Eucharist. Maybe this will be a time for spiritual renewal. Frequently we do not appreciate what we have until it is gone.

In the Gospel reading today, Jesus sends the disciples out two by two to preach the Gospel. Jesus never sends people out by themselves. We need the love and support of others in life and to evangelize. I think we learned that during the lockdown for COVID. We longed for all of those social relationships we had and all of the support that came from them. That is the way God created us, to be in relationship with others. I always knew being connected with a Catholic Community was important, but now I believe it is more important than ever.

Jesus also tells them not to take anything for the journey. I don't think he wanted them to spend a lot of time preparing, because we can get so caught up in the preparation that we never evangelize. That can be a problem as we evangelize. Sometimes we get so caught up in evangelizing the people that are already here in preparation to go out to the world that we never do go out to the world. You have contact with many people each day that you can spread the good news to; you do not need to make any special journeys. I cannot do that because I am here most of the time. Each one of you need to bring the people to church, I have to minister to them once they get here. Jesus also tells the disciples not to be discouraged by failure, just shake the dust off your sandals and move on. Invite people to come to Mass, and better yet, come with them. If they say they are not interested, will that be devastating to you? We extend all kinds of invitations to people every day; and we are not devastated if they say no, and we do not stop inviting if they say no a couple of times. We may be disappointed when people say no, but we are not devastated. Why would it be different if you extend

an invitation for someone to come to church with you?

Start with the people that you know that you have not seen back yet. Get a directory. Everyone registered in the Parish is in the directory. Drop them a note or give them a call. Ask the people who sit around you if you do not know their name. They will be delighted to hear from you. If the situation were reversed, wouldn't you be glad that someone misses you? When you see someone at the store or out and about, tell them you miss them and extend an invitation. I think there are people who are fully vaccinated but still reluctant to come back to church. No judgment, but tell them that you were a little reluctant at first, and tell them how glad you are to be back. Some have probably just gotten used to the streaming. Tell them how much better it is to be at Mass live. We will continue doing the streaming for now, but maybe we should stop. We need to be in community. Jesus is always sending us out. He never tells us to stay home alone. Some people have probably just gotten out of the habit of coming. No judgment, if we have been doing something else for a year and a half, you may have developed new habits. Is what you are doing now more important than coming to church? Maybe they just need an invitation. Tell them that we are having Sunday coffee and donuts and Saturday night snacks again. Tell them about the picnic on Sunday, August 22nd, from 12:00-3:00 PM. There will be food, games, a raffle and lots of fun.

I feel very blessed to know Jesus and to be part of this Catholic community. Do you feel the same? If you found a new restaurant that you really like or a great new movie, wouldn't you be telling everyone about it? Why is our St. Edith Family any different? If everyone who is here brought just one person back to Mass, our Masses would be full again. Wouldn't that be great?

Love & Peace,

Fr. Jim