

HOMILY 22ND Sunday Ordinary Time

August 31, 2025

This week I was reading about a concept called “Intentional Imperfection.” It starts with admitting that we cannot do everything we have to do perfectly. We need to accept our limitations and decide where we need to excel and where we need to just get by. Identify the tasks that are most important to you and choose the tasks you will handle with minimal effort or let go completely. Give yourself a break and allow yourself to kind of let go of the things that really do not matter. If you are a young parent, maybe spending time with your children is most important so you want to excel at that. Cleaning the house is maybe not so important. You do not to live in squalor, but maybe you can give that minimal effort. I hear people say “Her house is immaculate. You can eat off the floor.” If someone comes to my house and starts eating off the floor, I tell them to get up and stop doing that.

The readings today are about humility. Humility is the wisdom to know and accept your strengths and your limitations. Humility is not a weakness or constant self degradation. Humility is clarity and honesty about ourselves, our gifts and charisms and our limitations. Everyone has charisms and we need to focus on serving others through our charisms. Those are the areas where we can excel. We tend to undervalue our charisms. People say “that is not big deal. It is just something I have always been able to do.” It is not a big deal to you because you have always been able to do that, but it is a big deal to others. Other people tend to see your charisms and they will seek them out, even if you are not aware of them. I have had people say “people I don’t know very well tell me their personal problems and their life story. I don’t know why they do that.” You probably have the charism of listening or encouragement. They probably feel better after they talk to you. Some of our charisms we do not see as charisms. Recently a whole group of comedians from around the world met with Pope Francis. He commended the comedians for their service to others and how they help people in their spiritual lives. One of the Catholic comedians said “I never thought my making people laugh helped people with their spiritual lives.

We also have to be honest about the things we are not good at and start planning our “Intentional Imperfections.” There may be things that are very important and you are not very good at them. If that is the case you are going to have to work really hard at those things if you need to do them yourselves. But maybe you do not need to do them. I think couples complement each other all of the time when they divide up duties in their household. Things are frequently divided by traditional gender roles but they do not have to be. You each should do what you are good at. Parents do this as well. “My spouse is the disciplinarian, I am the fun parent.” We need to acknowledge the things we are not good at. I have done that as pastor of St. Edith. I am not good with numbers. I earned 5 advanced degrees without ever taking a math class. I can oversee the budget and make sure we are good stewards of the money that we have, but I have a fabulous bookkeeper to keep everything in order and a great Finance Council made up of people that are good with numbers, who oversee everything and advise me. I do not attempt to do that alone.

I think it is really important that we help our children figure out what they are good at and what they are not good at. To expect our children to excel at everything is putting unreal expectations on them. We need to help them decide what is really important that they excel at and what they can kind of let slide. It is important that our children try a lot of different things, but if they are not good at it or they do not like it, they may be able to let it slide. We need to help them discover their charisms and their limitations.

And Jesus makes a very clear point in the Gospel reading. It is great to get honors and acclamations, and we probably do not affirm one another near enough, but we cannot do what we do to get the honors and the acclamations. That is where we get terribly off track. So give that some thought and prayer today. Plan some “Intentional Imperfections.”