

HOMILY 11TH Sunday Ordinary Time

June 14, 2026

I assume that most of us have done our spring planting. Our Parish gardeners have done that here and I want to thank them for their beautiful work. But now the work has just begun. We have to nurture those new plants; make sure they are watered and fertilized. And then there is the weeding. We have to keep on top of the weeding or it can get out of hand and overtake our vegetable and flower gardens. If we do all of this work, our flower gardens will get more and more beautiful, and our vegetable gardens will produce great fruit. Planting the seeds and the new plants in the spring is fun and kind of painless. Some of the work is not particularly fun at times, particularly the weeding, but it is worth it when you see the results.

In the Gospel reading we hear “The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for the harvest.” Spreading the Gospel in our Parish is kind of like planning and caring for our gardens. The harvest is only going to be abundant if we have lots of laborers. We plant the seed. We need to schedule Masses and sacraments and different activities. We need to make sure people know about them and are invited. When people get here, we have to nurture them. We need to make sure they feel welcome and never judged. We need to provide hospitality to develop community. We need to make sure our worship and our sacraments are life giving and foster spiritual growth. We need to make sure our programs are worthwhile and meet the needs of our community. It takes many laborers to get involved to have an abundant harvest. Everyone has different talents and gifts to offer, and we need all of them.

We are all working on the Restructuring of the Archdiocese of Detroit. We have planted the seed. We have learned that 70% of our parishes have less than 600 people attending Masses on the weekend. We learned that we have a dwindling number of priests and we can project there will be 40% fewer priests within the next 10 years. We also learned that we have many more buildings than we need or are able to maintain. I think we

agree that something needs to be done to compensate for these changes. Now we have to start nourishing the seeds we have planted. We need to create a model to make changes. This is where we have to start to change, and we know that change is hard, even if we know it is change for the better and is very much needed. I was so pleased to have so many people attend the listening sessions here last week. We had about 600 people and there was some lively discussion. Right now, we are looking at the models that have been developed by the priests, pointing out what we like about them and what we do not like about them. And if we were really honest we would like for our St. Edith to stay exactly the same and every other Parish can change. But of course we all have to change. If you came to one of the listening sessions, you will get a survey by email to provide feedback on the models. If you did not attend one of the listening sessions, the models will be published on line and you can complete a survey giving your input. There is also a workbook on line for every parish in the AOD. I would encourage you to look at the workbooks. There is a lot of data there, and maybe the preconceived notions you have about a parish just are not true. The next step is to put all of the information together and create the model for the Archdiocese. After we have the models, decisions will be made about priest assignments. We are not there yet. I will be here at least one more year as the changes are not going to be implemented until July of 2027. Priests come and go, but the community will remain. We have a fabulous community at St. Edith.

Now we can look at the Restructuring and complain, criticize and condemn the whole effort. Change is hard, and we may be inclined to do that. But we all agree that change is needed. One of the things that I love about our St. Edith Family is that we are not a community of complainers. When problems are identified, people here immediately step in to be part of the solution. I love that. So, continue to be part of the solution. Change is hard, but we will get through this together. Remember the goal is to have vibrant parishes, flourishing priests and a Church in the Archdiocese of Detroit that can continue the work of Jesus Christ.