

HOMILY 26TH SUNDAY Ordinary Time

September 27, 2026

I was talking to someone the other day and they told me that they no longer come to Mass because they think the Church is full of hypocrites. And I said, “We have room for one more. Come to Mass.” Just kidding, I did not really say that, but it is somewhat true. As followers of Jesus Christ there is sometimes a gap between what we say, what we aspire to be, and how we actually live our lives. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are always challenged to do a little better. We can always love each other better.

We have another parable in the Gospel reading today. A father asks his two sons to go and work in the vineyard. One says “no” but goes anyway, the other says “yes” and does not go. The first son is the one that does his father’s will. Actions speak louder than words.

I think we can learn a couple of lessons from this parable. Sometimes our immediate reaction to a question or situation is on an emotional level and may be the reaction we want to have. For example, if you are angry or hurt or irritated, it is probably not the best time to react. If it is in response to an email or text, you may want to blast the sender. Most of the time you do not need to give an immediate response. I believe in the 24-hour cooling off period, maybe even longer than 24 hours. And maybe if it is a text or an e-mail, it could be better resolved with a conversation. Communication experts tell us that words make up only about 10-20% of communication when you communicate only with words. Things like tone of voice and body language is the other 80-90%. And when you decide a conversation may be more appropriate to handle a situation, really listen and be open to changing your mind during or after the conversation. The other person may bring up all kinds of things or see things in a different light that never occurred to you.

Sometimes our initial reaction or inclination is not correct. For the more important decisions, I tend to want to sit with them and take them to prayer before I

decide. I am more likely to make a good decision if I do this. But if you communicated a decision and later realize the decision was wrong, it is ok to change your mind. Sometimes we don't want to admit that we were wrong more than we want to be right. It may be appropriate to start with a simple apology and then acknowledge that you have changed your mind.

Remember, Jesus was directing the parable to the chief priest and the elders. Jesus accuses them of being hypocrites because they focused upon fulfilling the letter of the law and there was no internal conversion. They condemned people for not following the law and did not help them spiritually. At St. Edith we have tried to become the most welcoming parish in the Archdiocese of Detroit. It is easy to say all are welcome, but actions speak louder than words. It is more than just letting people walk through the doors. We need to make people feel as though they belong when they get here. A number of young parents have told me that they feel their children are welcome. If their children act up a little, people around them give them a smile or nod, or thank them for bringing their children, or say, it is ok. I went through that when my children were young. Actions speak louder than words. We cannot say all are welcome and then criticize them when they get here. We need to make feel welcome to come to our coffee and donuts and Saturday night snacks, our pizza dinners, our spaghetti dinners. If you see someone sitting alone, invite them to your table. Being a registered member of the Parish is never a requirement for participating in any of our activities or volunteering in any of our ministries. Everybody belongs here.

Being welcoming is one of the strengths of our St. Edith Community. We are not sure what will happen with the restructuring of the Archdiocese of Detroit. Everyone is going to have to change, and that is difficult. As I am going to be retiring in July of 2027, you are going to have to welcome a new pastor. Let's think about how are we going to welcome the new pastor? Our welcoming community is still going to be here after the restructuring. That will help us to face the changes that are to come.