

Building a Culture of Discipleship Part 4

Dear Parishioners,

This journey we are on as a parish, as people of God, is amazing, and sometimes it is hard. We know from the bible and Jesus that as Christians we are each called to follow the commandments, and especially the two greatest ones, and that he sends us out to share our faith with the world. We may be very comfortable and feel confident in loving God, and even in loving others. But how do we feel about who we are as people of faith in our world, this world right now, to share our faith and make disciples? What does that mean and how do we do it?

In our own lives, we all have a place and a role – mother, father, spouse, son, daughter, friend, student, employee, worker, leader, and so on. We all have a circle of relationships that enrich our lives, and sometimes challenge us too, of people who we care about, and with whom we share time and experiences. How often do we think about and reflect on the impact and influence that we may have in those relationships? We know as parents that how we handle things, so too will our children – if we are calm, they will be calm; if we are thoughtful of others, they will be too. We know as workers at a place of employment that our disposition can impact the mood of the team and the outcome of our work. We know as a spouse that our thoughtfulness and consideration of the needs of our partner can lead them to feel loved and supported. Whether we realize it or not, think about it or not, who we are and how we live our lives every day has an impact on the others in our life.

And so the third conversation in our efforts to build the culture of discipleship at Holy Family is based on these relationships in our lives as people of faith: How does the work you do and the way you live your life contribute to the ministry and mission of the Church? How do you personally help bring people to Jesus? Wow! That is a very big question! How can I possibly be someone who brings others to know Christ? We may not feel secure in our knowledge of our faith to do this, we may not feel worthy enough to be this guide in faith, we may not even feel we have any idea how we would do this, or if we want to. But, like it or not, want it or not, who we are and how we live does affect the other people in our lives.

We are in a serious time of transition now, we cannot rely so much on what we have known and believed from our past to help us navigate our future which is uncertain and unknown in so many ways. As our whole world hobbles through this difficult time of pandemic, we are all challenged in different ways that may lead us to raise up and draw upon different ways of being which enable us to not only cope, but to survive and thrive in the world that is to come. How we are faithful people during this transition will set our path for the future. We may be anticipating and discerning our day to day life right now, while we are also learning and changing, adapting to the way things are, and hopefully we are praying, a lot! It is in our faith that we may find the strength and resources of faith and love to feel the optimism and hope that we need as we face what is to come.

One of our more well-known saints was very aware of our call to be disciples and to make disciples when in the early 1200s St. Francis of Assisi said, “Do all you can to preach the gospel and if necessary use words!” Thinking that we may not have to find the “right words” to bring others to know Jesus might be somewhat reassuring. St. Francis also reflected on his own feeling of inadequacy to do this holy work here on earth, but he realized that God calls all of us in our own human imperfections to build up the family of God. This also is reassuring. So how do we go out on this mission to “make disciples”? How do we in our own lives help bring people to Jesus? It can be through how we live and demonstrate our regard and love for the life of fulness and joy that God promised us, that others will see the goodness of being faithful and want to walk beside us.

Are you an evangelist? Can you through the relationships and interactions in your own life help others come to know God and live a life in faith? All 4 writers of the Gospels are called evangelists because they lived and shared their life in Christ through writing the stories of the life of Jesus in the bible. Their reason for doing so was to point us in the direction to continue the work. There are many ways to evangelize: directly walking the journey of faith with someone; instructing someone who is seeking, or a child who has questions; living your life in a Christian way; staying focused always on the great commandments – love God, love others - and having them at the centre of your life; modelling a Christian life for your family; in all things, at all times, whatever the situation or dilemma, asking ourselves, “What would Jesus do?” Did you know there is a simple answer to that question? “He would show his love.”

We invite everyone at this time to reflect on who we are in God’s family, and how we can further the mission to “make disciples of all nations”. In continuing our own journey to be disciples and in making disciples we can help to transform our hurting and struggling world into the creation of beauty God intended.

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