

24 OT – B, 9-16-18

C.I.: Embarking on the New Evangelization

1. Today's Gospel

In today's Gospel, we reach a pivotal moment in our walk with the Lord.

The disciples/followers have listened to Jesus' words. For example, they've heard Jesus' parable about the sower who scatters seed. The parable of lamp hidden under a bushel basket and also the mustard seed.

The disciples have also first-hand witnessed extraordinary works: They've seen the calming of the storm at sea, Jesus feeding 5000 and then 4000, & numerous physical and spiritual healings.

But now Jesus stops in his tracks, turns to his followers after all this and asks them a question.

2. Not the question

NOT, "So what do you think about all I've taught?" Or "my miracles?" He doesn't seem interested in whether his words or deeds are persuasive or popular or controversial.

But Jesus does want to know is the answer to question, "Who do people say that I am?"

NOT what do people ABOUT me.

And more specifically to his followers are before him now, "Who do you say that I am?"

His question is about his identity. Who he is.

3. Why is Jesus wanting this?

Why?

Because they are following HIM.

- A. They haven't joined a membership club like Costco.
- B. They haven't signed for a class over at Folsom Lake College.
- C. They haven't signed a statement of belief in some doctrine or teaching.
- D. They haven't registered in a parish.

E. They haven't signed up to get their sacraments.

No, Jesus wants his followers—us—to know who he is so that we can know HIM, personally and intimately, in our lives and all we are going through right now.

4. **Why?**

And why does Jesus want that?

Because God is love. And love seeks to be in communion, to enter into a living, real relationship with one whom we love.

5. **Disciples first signed on**

The disciples first signed on to follow Jesus. They have signed on—for now—to follow him, come to know him, live with him, walk with him, learn from him, love him, center their entire lives around him, and—*in time*—to witness to him before us. To bring him to others. *To speak about him. And most of them by the end of their lives will be asked to actually die for him.*

6. **Why does this matter?**

Why does any of this matter?

Because coming to know who Jesus is and coming to know him personally will enable us to answer the big questions of life that we have, but seldom get around addressing ... like

A. Why am I here?

B. How do I find happiness?

C. What is the meaning of life?

D. Why is this world and our church so broken?

E. What went wrong?

F. Is there any credible reason to hope?

7. **Parish: New initiative/movement**

This all gets to the heart of what we are about as followers of Christ, as His church. And it brings it us to a new initiative, our new parish movement as we begin the New Evangelization.

For those of you who were here last spring, you may recall several homilies I gave focused on the New Evangelization. Those efforts have now begun. I want to give you update on them and where our parish are headed.

8. New Evangelization

It gets to the heart as to why we are here.

What we're all about?

What is the ultimate purpose of our parish?

Why do we exist?

- A. Take care of the poor?
- B. Educate our youth in values and morals?
- C. To get our kids the sacraments?
- D. Worship and pray to God together?
- E. Be a welcoming, caring community for each other and serve our community?
- F. So that I can go to heaven when I die?

9. Jesus answered it: Great Commission

But moments before Jesus ascended into heaven, in his final moments in the flesh on earth,

he gave the final mandate, charge, mission to us:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded of you.”

It's what *Pope Paul VI* stated so clearly in 1975,

“The church exists to evangelize.”

And it's why *Pope John Paul* urgently said in the 21st century we need to be about a *New Evangelization*.

And that's why Pope Francis said we can no longer say “disciples” and “missionaries” but only “missionary disciples” meaning all the baptized.

That word—Evangelization—can make many Catholics feel on edge.

Maybe we equate it with:

- Televangelists on TV asking people for money to save their souls or
- Street-corner preachers.....Young men/bicycles
- Religious tracts placed in your hand.

10.No fear

But we mustn't fear that word:

To evangelize: to proclaim in word the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus

Christ.

11. Jesus IS the Good News

New Evangelization is a call for every man, woman and child to fall in love, grow in love and

walk in love with God who loves us.

It's more than believing in Jesus Christ, it is loving Christ and

being in love with Christ.

It's about having a grasp of what the Good News of the Gospel is.

Being able to speak it and share it with ease and confidence.

This is the vision of where we are headed at

Holy Trinity. To strengthen us, renew our passion and equip us now to live the mission of Christ's church.

So that's it in a nutshell. So much need to be said, and it will.

12. Begun these steps

And we are now begun these taking concrete steps and allocating parish resources to accomplish this:

A. Orientation Sessions to Parish Leaders

We've conducted trainings and orientation on the NE to our (1) Faith Formation catechists, (2) HTSM staff and (3) leaders of ministries and organizations (today).

(4) And we be offering to all you an evening to learn more about the NE next month, 10/11, to all in parishioners.

B. Alpha

We have now begun one key step in the New Evangelization: It's called "Alpha" (Gk: 1st letter)

We now have a pilot group of some 65 parishioners attending. What is it? It's a short course that explores life and faith and meaning, to the basics and the questions we deep-down want to know.

It's not a class, not a program:

It's a free delicious meal, an inspiring talk and informal, casual conversation.

And it will be open to all parishioners beginning this winter. And will be offered at a variety of times throughout the year for years to come.

*And, like Stewardship, will become, in time,
part of the fabric of our parish from teenagers on up.*

C. Build Small Communities of Faith where people can simply connect, get to know one another and be encouraged and strengthened in living today as Christians.

D. Strengthen opportunities to grow as Christians through Bible Studies and Speaker Series and beyond.

E. We've also hired two new employees who be introduced to you soon at all our Masses:

Cynthia Mulcaire, NE & FF ministries, younger children and adults

Hannah Terbrack, NE and FF ministries, 7-12 grds and young adults

13. The Gospel Matters

Our families, our communities, our church need to know Christ. The Gospel DOES matter:

A. *To know that God exists—*

who created them, loves them and
wants to love them for an eternity?

B. *To know who they are in Christ—*

that they have a dignity that doesn't depend on
how they look or what they own or how much
they earn or what kind of car or house they have?

C. To know *moral and religious truth exist*

and to how to live in accord with the truth?

D. *To know whatever happens in their lives ahead*

they can in Christ rise above their sins and failures
and always begin again with hope?

**E. *To know that God gives them his own Body and
Blood as food?***

**F. *To know how to live as brother and sisters,
and one day as husbands and wives,
mothers and fathers honoring God's***

perfect plan?

G. And to know how to find the peace and joy and happiness for which they long and for which they were made?

14. Join us

I hope you will join us on this journey ahead.

Questions? So do I.

We will be learning about this together.

You are needed.

Because programs don't evangelize people.

People evangelize people.

People like you and me:

Missionary disciples of Christ.