

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In this Sunday's Gospel we hear Jesus send out the disciples in pairs with the instructions: "The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest" (Lk 10:2).

We as a parish have been focusing a lot of our energy on growing as disciples of the Lord. Jesus sends us out of the walls of our church buildings to be his witnesses to a world that is absolutely desperate (always has been!) for salvation. The temptation is to think that the work of evangelization and discipleship is for others (like Father and staff). That couldn't be further from the truth. Jesus sent the 72 out in pairs so that we would never be alone in our mission. The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few. So many people in our town have never heard of Jesus Christ or what he has done to save us from our sins and bring us to eternal life. There is no one else but you to bring them the Gospel. Just as it was the mission of the 72, it is also our mission. Each and every one of us is called to disciple and mentor people we know to encounter Jesus in his Word and Sacraments, be transformed by his grace, and respond to the call.

These last few months the strategic planning committee has been meeting to listen to the various groups of the parish to see how we can better respond to the universal call of holiness and the command of Jesus in the Gospel: "Go and make disciples of all nations." The final report and recommendations from those listening sessions is ready to be shared with the whole parish for continued discernment. This Sunday in the homily, we will be reflecting on the three-fold mission of our parish – evangelization, worship, and charity. Over the next few months everyone in the parish will have an opportunity to read through the report and submit questions. We will have various 'listening sessions' and times of prayer and discernment in front of the Blessed Sacrament to ask the Holy Spirit to guide our efforts to prepare a plan for the future building up of our parish. After gathering all that information, the plan with all the comments will be sent to Bishop Walsh for his discernment and approval.

The temptation for me, as your parish priest, throughout this planning process is to look at this through 'worldly lenses'. Looking at buildings, and bills, and blight – rather than seeing all of this through God's perspective of the mission of bringing people to encounter the saving power of Jesus Christ. Its overwhelming if one tries to make sense of all this from a human perspective. Yet, God gave us the gift of reason and right judgement to discern together the best path forward for the mission. We need a plan. This plan doesn't depend on me or my idea nor the ideas of a select few. This must be because we have all discerned the movement of the Holy Spirit in our midst and are following God's plan.

God Bless,
Fr. Tyler