

Dear Eucharistic Ministers and Sacristans,

*The following article is a reflection By Rich Akins from Celebration Publications for the 10th Sunday in Ordinary Time*

Life is filled with challenges and often consumed with activities, whether at work or school. Many struggle to find time to even share a meal with their families. Time is at such a premium that often the important relationships in our lives take a back seat to the pressures of the day. If a crisis should appear — an illness in the family, loss of a job, a struggling marriage — the challenge can become unbearable, straining already tenuous relationships.

It was no different for Jesus and his followers. In today's Gospel, Jesus' young ministry is faced with many of the same challenges that face us. Jesus has just appointed his apostles, 12 men of varying backgrounds and life experiences — men who will soon understand the demands of discipleship, the sacrifices they will be called to make. Eager to learn from Jesus, they must have wondered what they had gotten themselves into in those early days.

Jesus and his apostles are challenged with a growing group of people putting great demands on their time. They are confronted by the non-believers, the naysayers, those who fear Jesus. And, they are challenged by what the demands of discipleship will do to their personal relationships, their relationships with family and friends.

The scene in today's Gospel is one of chaos, of crowds so demanding the disciples find it impossible "even to eat." Jesus' family, concerned with how his actions reflect on them, claim he is out of his mind. The scribes, fearful of the growing crowd, say Jesus himself is possessed.

And how does Jesus respond? As he so often does, with a parable; with a story meant to guide the listener to look at life from another perspective. To look at life's challenges, not from society's norms, but from the perspective of the Father's love, one that calls us to a deeper understanding of what it means to be his children.

Jesus says "if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand" (Mark 3:25). How do we act when faced with challenge or stress in our life? How do we treat others, especially when our own belief system is questioned? Sometimes when challenged, our actions are self-centered, borne out of stubbornness, selfishness, hurt or fear. We fail to act with compassion. It is at these times that we feel our "house" begin to collapse, to fall around us.

If we are to live as Christ taught us, to love one another, to help each other journey together, our house must be built with Christ at the center —



built with humility, forgiveness, understanding, love. To build our lives, our house with anything less, is to invite disaster. To live our lives with these virtues is to invite others to participate in the saving grace of God's love. It allows God to transform others by opening our hearts to the Spirit. By living our lives with love, we invite others to become our brothers and sisters, our family.

"Family" was everything during Jesus' time, defining status, wealth, security. Without family, a person was lost and without any support. Yet Jesus redefines what family is, who family is. In the closing verses of today's Gospel, Jesus presents the greatest challenge to his followers then and to us: "Who are my mother and my brothers? And looking around at those seated in the circle he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother'" (Mark 3:33-35).

Jesus reminds us of this as he hung upon the cross. Looking down from the cross, he said, "Woman, behold your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother" (John 19:26-27).

A friend of mine once remarked that being a Christian is not an insurance policy against anything bad happening. What it does mean is that Jesus will always be with us. Challenges, too, will always be with us. But those challenges help us grow in our faith, give us strength for the journey, help us grow closer to our Lord.

#### *Some Information:*

- Attached is the Eucharistic Minister Schedule from June 9, 2018 through September 23, 2018. The schedules are also on our website at [www.steseton.com](http://www.steseton.com).
- Sacristans at the 10:00AM Mass: We will go back to putting out four (4) cups of wine. The choir will be off for the Summer Months. After Labor Day we will add an additional cup.
- The Outdoor Mass and Parish Picnic is back this year on Sunday August 5th. Liturgical Ministers, Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Greeters, and Altar servers will be needed. A sign up sheet will be on the cabinet in the Narthex in July.
- There will be a sign up sheet for the Masses on The Feast of the Assumption, August 15th. There will be a Vigil Mass on Tuesday, August 14th at 7pm and two Masses on Wednesday 15th, one at 9am and the second at 7pm.

And many thanks for continuing to offer to help out at the Mass you are attending whether you are scheduled or not. The ministers who are checking you in are so very grateful.

We have begun the liturgical season of Ordinary Time. May we appreciate the gifts of joy and peace in the ordinary moments of our every day lives.

Claudia Nolan