

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Cycle A

Saint Margaret Parish, Bel Air

October 9, 2011 All Masses

People and Relationships

I know of at least two families in this parish who have what I think is a good family practice.

To begin with, they try to have dinner together as many evenings as possible. And when they do, they begin with grace – a prayer thanking God or asking God’s blessing on the meal.

And then, as part of the prayer, they go around the table and do some sharing – mother, father, and children – elementary, middle or high school. Each of them will share either the highlight of the day, or something to be thankful for, or someone or some need to pray for.

Then they close the prayer with a simple *Amen*. I like so many things about this – making time together for dinner, praying together, and sharing with one another.

And usually, that sharing in prayer leads to more sharing or conversation during the meal. This is so important.

Families today are very, very busy – pulled in a thousand directions. But what is important is to slow down, and step back from doing this task or that activity.

It is so important just to focus on each other as persons and on our relationships. That’s what really matters.

Buildings for People

This weekend, I am talking at all the Masses about some tasks that we have to do here at Saint Margaret’s.

I am talking about buildings and some similar needs. But I am really talking about people.

It is people – you who are part of the parish and others whom we are called to serve – it is people whom we are really all about. The gospels say this repeatedly and I and we must keep this in mind.

Saint Margaret’s Buildings

Over the last month and a half, I have devoted many bulletin columns to the needs of two of our buildings here at Saint Margaret’s.

The focus is on the church and the hall that is part of the elementary education building. We are at a moment where we need to do some significant tending of these buildings.

First, our church is 42 years-old. There are many repair needs, like the roof.

There is some needed renovation, like the bathrooms. There is some desired liturgical enhancement – parishioners have expressed the desire for more light, color, and spiritual imagery.

Then, our hall is about 50 years-old. The hall has a good floor and a good roof and beyond that, almost everything else needs repair or renovation.

Process

There has been a very careful process for studying all of this.

It began with an open forum about the church last fall and has included other consultations. Our Facilities Committee has led the way in the professional studies on both the church and the hall.

Other committees and ultimately our Pastoral Council have all been involved in approving this direction. The process has been as thorough as possible.

Archdiocese

At the same time as we have been going through our study, Archbishop O'Brien has led the Archdiocese in a similar kind of study

The Archbishop has identified some significant needs. These needs are things that we can only do collectively, as an Archdiocesan Church.

They are responsibilities that are beyond the scope of any individual parish. We collectively as 150 parishes do these together.

Primary among these needs are Catholic education, Catholic Charities institutions, priests retirement and vocations. This weekend I am beginning to talk about these Archdiocesan needs in my bulletin column.

As always, please be sure to read it! Next week I will reflect with you again about how we will approach all of this and make the vision into a reality.

Conclusion

I conclude with where I began.

We are looking at buildings and other capital needs. But we are really looking at people, people like you and me and others whom the Church serves.

To use Jesus' image in today's gospel parable, we want to invite all people to the wedding feast. We want to connect with everyone in this parish and community and bring them the warm message of God.

I never want to lose sight of this vision of people. That is what we are all about.