Have you ever watched the TV show, “America’s Got Talent”? It is always amazing to me the variety of talents that are portrayed on the show. The show reminds us that we all have talents in some area or the other. This is the third weekend of our message series on sharing. My focus today is on sharing our talents with our parish.

The first reading from the Old Testament Book of the Prophet Malchi reminds us that our ACTIONS and behaviors matter. They either lead us toward God or away from God. What kind of parish ACTIVITIES have you been involved in over the years? What talents have you used? If you don’t know what your talents and strengths are, feel free to contact Kelli Devries, a parish staff member, who is trained to help you in this area.

When we use our God-given talents in service to the parish we become models to others of what an ACTIVE member of the parish looks like. This is what St. Paul is getting at in the second reading today. Some members of the Christian community in Thessalonica are idle for no good reason; as such they are causing disorder in the community. Paul uses himself as a model of an ACTIVE member of the community. Paul was a talented tent maker and so he reminds them that he has worked hard night and day so as not to be a burden to them.

Are you an idle member of this parish community for no good reason? Right now, only 32 percent of us are ACTIVE in some way in the life of the parish. 68 percent of us can’t be so busy, or so ill, or so old that we can’t be ACTIVE in some small way? Even when we are ill or old we can still pray for the parish community! If you go on our webpage and look under “share” you will find 70 different ways for ACTIVELY sharing your talents. Staff members will be available after mass in the gathering area to talk with you about some of these ways to share.
As you have might have noticed as we come closer to the end of the liturgical year, which ends next weekend, the scripture readings are about the end of time. Jesus reminds us today in the gospel reading that this will be a time of judgement... a judgment in which he will ask us how we have used our talents. Have we used them mostly for ourselves or mostly for others?

Over the years that I have been pastor members of the parish staff and parish leadership have been reading about a parish in Timonium, Maryland that has reinvented itself, moving from a declining and lifeless parish to one that is dynamic and growing. Some members of our staff have even visited the parish when they offer workshops on how to be a dynamic Catholic parish.

One thing that we learned is that we must change our attitudes when it comes to ACTIVE parish membership. Most of us need to go from being consumers, that is, just showing up and expecting to be taken care of in some way or another to being ACTIVE disciples and ministers to one another.

The pastor of Nativity parish in Timonium, Fr. Michael White, writes, “Jesus insisted on the support and assistance of his disciples throughout his ministry. From the miracle of the loaves and fish, to raising Lazarus from the dead, those around him were pressed into service to help him. They were expected to assist. Consistently, he would do his part only after the disciples did what they could do. Ministry is supposed to be a team sport.” He adds, “Christians who don’t serve in their church family are, at best, baby disciples.” Does this describe you?

A family from the parish will now share about God’s call and their response.