

Toolbox Nuts & Bolts – Homily Hints Commitment Weekend

One of the greatest joys of being your priest has been getting to know you all. Here at our parish, we are a family. Being a part of a family is a wonderful experience. When God sent His Son to earth, He entrusted Him to a family. Jesus knew the support of a family, including the support of his mother, foster father, cousins, and good friends that became like family.

Being a part of a family means we always have someone to support us, through good times and bad. There is never a time when we are alone when we are a part of a family. Family life often means learning very quickly to share, like food at the dinner table. Being a part of a family also means making sacrifices to support one another, to always be there for somebody else.

We are all sons and daughters of a good Heavenly Father. When we consider ourselves all a member of the family of God, we reframe the way we think about others. Suddenly all those around us become our brothers and sisters, not just those who we are related to by blood.

Charity is the perfect love of God given to us. All of our acts of love are a response to the love of God poured out to us on a daily basis. In today's Gospel we hear Jesus share with us the Golden Rule: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." This love, Jesus says, must first be preceded by our love for God. It is through loving our neighbor that we express our love for God — heart, soul, mind and strength. When we have accepted the love of God in our hearts, we are then called to go out and share that love with others in the world. When we give of ourselves, we are giving the love of God to others as He has given to us.

Each year at this time, we as a diocesan community of faith, and especially as a parish family, come together to show our love to our neighbors. The Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) gives us the opportunity to express our love for God through our generosity and charity to our neighbor. Through our gift to the CSA, we are sharing the love of God that has been given to us with all.

This year's theme for the CSA, is "*Christ makes all things new.*" This theme is very fitting considering the last year we have all experienced. There has been much heartache and trial presented to us in the last year. Now is a good time to begin anew! Let us make a fresh start together because we know that Christ promises a new life with him. He truly does make all things new and we place our trust in him to refresh our hearts and fill them with the joy of the Resurrection.

God has created an opportunity for us to cooperate with His plan to make all things new. As we reflect on all the blessings that God has given us, let us share our gifts with one another through the Catholic Services Appeal.

This weekend, I am asking that you reflect on how Christ has made your life new this year. Ask yourself, “How am I being called to love my neighbor?” I invite you to make a pledge to the CSA. It is through your generosity to the CSA that so many essential ministries of the diocese are made possible.

Ministries such as supporting our retired priests, which helps those who have given their lives in service to the Church in their old age; Catholic schools, which are so important to forming the young minds and souls of the children who are the future of the Church; seminarian formation, which supports the men called to the priestly vocation as they prepare to go out and serve the people of God; parish faith formation, which supports the growth and spiritual nourishment of parishes, including our own, and all parishioners; and Catholic Charities, which provides physical resources to the poor and vulnerable of Central Texas. Your gift, no matter how large or small, makes a tremendous difference in the lives of thousands in our diocese. It is because of the gifts that you make that your neighbors, your brothers and sisters in Christ, have the support they need to be both physically and spiritually nourished.

I have witnessed your immense generosity in the past. Our parish works hard to meet our goal every year. As Christ makes all things new, I would love to see a renewal of commitment to helping our brothers and sisters in Christ. Let’s top what we did last year. I know that together as a parish family we can make a huge impact in the lives of thousands in the Diocese of Austin. In this year of new life, let us search deep in our hearts to serve those most in need by increasing our gift to the CSA. I personally make a pledge, as well, and have committed to increasing my donation this year.

There are pledge cards in each pew. I invite you to prayerfully discern how you can give this year. Truly reflect on the blessings God has given you and ask how He is calling you to share those blessings with those most in need. When you have had time to reflect, I invite you to fill out a pledge card and return it in the collection basket.

Please consider making a gift today using the pledge card. There are also several options for how to give, that may be more convenient for you.

1. You can give online at www.austindiocese.org/give
2. Text your “GIFTS” to (512) 400-3870 or
3. Enter your gift at www.austindicoese.org/give and a statement will be sent to remind you

No gift is too small to make a difference.

I am so grateful to God for each of you. I know that without you, our parish family would not be complete. Thank you so much for helping our parish reach its goal, and may God bless you for the love you have given to others through your generosity to His people.