



Sacred Heart Catholic Church

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Vision Sunday #3

Welcome to another visioning weekend! We are excited about the new vision of Sacred Heart (**Inviting Everyone to Passionately Live the Gospel**) and how this vision will help direct the future work of our parish community.

Last month we dove into the word 'Gospel'. This word references the Good News that though humanity is separated from God due to sin, God sent His only begotten son, Jesus Christ, into the world as a pure sacrifice so that we may be restored back into relationship with God Himself. This sacrifice makes it possible for you and I to one day enjoy the beatific vision in Heaven, a place of eternal peace, joy, freedom, and fulfillment.

This weekend we will expand the scope of the vision slightly to the phrase, **Live the Gospel**. If the reality of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection is the Gospel message that we are setting as the bedrock foundation, then what does it mean to 'Live' this mystery in our daily lives? I would like to propose two points to consider when thinking about what it means to Live the Gospel and why it is central to the vision of the parish.

1. First, God can be described as many things: omnipotent (all-powerful), omnipresent (everywhere), omniscient (all-knowing), vast, infinite, merciful, but **what most characterizes God is love**. "God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him" (1 John 4:16). Pope Benedict's 2005 encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love) dives deeply into this reality and its meaning. **God loves you personally, intimately, and profoundly**. God is beckoning and inviting you and me to be caught up in His love and live our entire lives being filled to the point of overflowing to those around us (Psalm 23:5). However, as many of us have experienced, love is challenging. It is a calling to place the good of others before ourselves. "Real love is demanding," as Pope St. John Paul II taught us over and over again in his pontificate. The supreme example of this love is Jesus himself, who loved us to the point of death on the cross (Philippians 2:8). Real love requires sacrifice and suffering. Jesus' crown showing that He is King of the Universe is a crown of thorns. This is why the crown of thorns is woven into our vision statement posters, banners, and even our new letterhead. To remind us all of this calling to self-sacrificial love for the good of others – just as Christ did for us.
2. Second, by 'Live the Gospel' we are referring to living out this reality of love in our daily lives. Is Church or being a Christian something we do only on Sunday mornings, or is it something we carry with us throughout the week as part of our deepest identity? Pope Francis again and again reminds us that the Church is not so much a museum of saints, as it is a field hospital for sinners. Each of us is called to bring the love of Christ to a broken, wounded, and increasingly hostile world, a world that may not be open to receiving this message of love. The Mass is where we return, as a battle-worn and fatigued people, to be revitalized by the gift of God's word in scripture, nourished by Jesus in the Eucharist, and strengthened in the community we have with one another. It is from the Mass then that we are sent out, catapulted back into the battle of bringing the love of God to a world that so desperately needs it.

This is the vision for Sacred Heart – to be a place where we all **Live the Gospel**.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!
Mary, star of the New Evangelization, pray for us!

- Thomas Eskro
Director of Evangelization
and Discipleship



Inviting Everyone
to Passionately Live the Gospel