

New Relationships Brought by Christ

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)

July 11, 2021

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In today's Gospel, Jesus encourages his disciples to travel simply as they go out to proclaim the Good News. "He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick—no food, no sack, no money in their belts. They were, however, to wear sandals but not a second tunic." While Jesus instructed his disciples not to take much along with them, notice at the very beginning of the passage what they were to always take with them, or rather, who they were to always take with them- another disciple. The first line of the passage said, "Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two." This is quite significant. The disciples were to go out in pairs because having human companionship on their journey would be essential, much more important than having possessions. People are always more valuable than material goods.

One of the blessings of becoming a Christian is the new relationships that come along with it. Many of us never would have met if it weren't for our Catholic faith in God. Let's face it- we are much too diverse to have ever come together for any other reason than God. People of different cultures, social classes, political parties, generations, and races come together peacefully in this church to celebrate the same Eucharistic, the sacrament of unity. Sadly, there are not many more places in our divided society to come together as one peacefully. Thankfully, we still have our Churches and the Eucharist.

In his document *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis encourages us to keep saying yes to the new relationships brought to us by Christ (87-92). This is a good reminder, as oftentimes our relationships become more and more limited and exclusive over the course of time. This is usually not done intentionally, but a natural occurrence that we must work against. As the pope writes, “our Christian ideal will always be a summons to overcome suspicion, habitual mistrust, fear of losing our privacy, [and] all the defensive attitudes which today’s world impose on us.” (88)

At St. Matthias Church, answering the call of Pope Francis, we say yes to the new relationships brought to us by Christ. The people around us are a blessing, of far greater worth than our possessions or material goods. Just as the disciples could not go out one by one on their journey, so too we cannot carry out our mission alone. Coming out of the covid pandemic, we will have many upcoming opportunities to become more involved in the parish and rebuild many of our relationships. It will also be a time to establish new relationships, particularly across the racial divide. We want to be a Catholic community inclusive of all our parishioners and unite them in the joy of Christ.

Christ calls us to develop new relationships as he sends us out into our community with the Good News.

What are the relationships I am looking forward to re-establishing? Who are the members of this community who I do not know very well? What opportunities are there for me to get to know other parishioners? Will I be able to let go of my suspicion or mistrust of others?