

SCREEN: Happy Mother's Day!

Again, happy Mother's Day to all the moms out there.

My mom worships with us online,

"So, Happy Mother's Day Mom...I love you!"

When I think back on how I was raised,

I don't know how my mom and dad did it all.

They raised a family, both worked outside the home,

while maintaining friendships,

being involved in organizations

and making sure we all got to church...

and they did all this *with six kids!!!*

As our family grew, my parents welcomed each new addition -

they loved and cared for each of us.

I can honestly say, they made me who I am today.

They taught me that life is about loving and caring for others.

This is also an important lesson for the members of God's family, the Church.

And when we imitate Jesus - when we love and care for others as he did,

then the Kingdom of God grows.

SCREEN: Sent main screen

Today we're beginning a four week message series

- *a preaching series* - titled, Sent.

After he rose from the dead, Jesus appeared to his disciples and said,

*"As the Father has sent me, **so I send you.**"*

Followers are 'sent' to do as Jesus did.

The first reading today from the Acts of the Apostles

told us how this happened when the Church was just getting started.

If you think back to last week's first reading,

we heard about the moment when the Church was born.

On Pentecost, 3000 people were baptized and joined the Church.

Now, that sounds like every pastor's dream, doesn't it?

3000 new members in one day!

I have to be honest, if I had been one of the Apostles,
my first reaction might have been to say,

"This is great. We have 3000 new members.

Let's hit the pause button, so we can get all the new folks settled.

Maybe we'll hold off on preaching for a while.

Let's create a waiting list for new baptisms.

Let's take a breather before we add more people."

Well, God had other plans for His family.

It kept growing by leaps and bounds...*every day!*

And, not surprisingly, this caused some growing pains.

Today's first reading told us that some members felt they
weren't receiving their share of food.

When the Apostles heard about it, here's what they said:

SCREEN: "It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table.

Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men,

filled with the Spirit and wisdom,

whom we shall appoint to this task,

whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer

and to the ministry of the word." -Acts 6

The Apostles wanted everyone to feel loved and cared for,

which included distributing food fairly when dinner time came.

But they also knew that Jesus gave them a very specific mission.

On the day he ascended, he commanded them to 'go make disciples'.

And they did.

They made sure the Church family kept growing because
that's what Jesus sent them to do.

And because they stayed focused on their mission

and didn't get distracted or sidetracked,
you and I are worshipping together now.
Well, just like the Apostles, we are also being
sent by Jesus to '*go make disciples*'.

And for this to happen, we must stay focused on our mission.

SCREEN: first things first

Have you ever heard the phrase: *first things first*?

It's used a lot in 12 step programs.

First things first.

It basically means:

- get your priorities straight,
- line up your goals and
- focus on what matters most.

First things first means, you don't try to do a hundred things all at once
because you'll never get anything done.

First things first is a principle the Apostles lived by and
why they were so successful as Church leaders.

It's a great lesson that every disciple must learn.

And it's essential for you who are also being sent.

Your relationship with God must be first in life.

First before family and friends,

first before career or school, first before everything else.

And please understand, Christ is not saying that family is unimportant,
or that friends don't matter.

He's not saying that one's job or education isn't essential.

They are all important....*for everyone of us*.

But for followers of Jesus, when you put God first in your life,

His love will overflow so much that you'll naturally want to share it.

And when God is first for all of Jesus' followers, the Church grows.

SCREEN: everyone is welcome because everyone matters

Here at St. Pius X Church, our parish motto is a simple one:

everyone is welcome because everyone matters.

And because we strive to practice this in all we say and do, our parish is continually being renewed by new members.

This vision only becomes reality when all of us do our part.

Today, I'd like to mention 3 ways you can show others that you've been sent.

Six years ago we introduced adult small groups to St. Pius.

These are groups of 8-12 adults who meet weekly to pray together, discuss the Sunday readings and message and support each other in the journey of discipleship.

I've been a member of a men's small group for the past five years and I can't even begin to tell you how much it has helped me as a disciple and as a pastor.

It's been incredible.

Now, why should you consider a small group?

Well, as I've discovered, not only will your own faith be strengthened and fed, but you'll nourish the faith of others.

Because most of our current small groups are meeting online right now..... it got us thinking,

Why not start an online small group for those who want to try it out?

So this Monday we will be launching an online small group that you can drop in to.

Our bulletin and website have all the information and a link to register.

I know it's hard to make any long term commitment right now, so just come when you're able.

SCREEN: spxbowie.org/invite

Here's another way you can show you are sent to help the church grow.

Early on in the pandemic we began online worship.

And we've heard from so many of you

how this Mass nourishes you and gives you hope.

If you haven't already done so, why not invite someone to join you?

Inviting has never been easier with links you can find on our website.

And the final way I'll mention is for you to help someone in need.

When the Apostles got word that people weren't being fed,
they knew they had to help them.

Who among your loved ones, or in your neighborhood
or your parish can you feed this week?

And it might be a physical hunger, but it could be an emotional hunger,
maybe it's a financial struggle, maybe it's a medical need.

SCREEN: spxbowie.org/needhelp

On our parish website we've added an entire page of resources
which can help you to reach out to someone who is hurting.

And we all know people who are hurting right now....

we're all struggling in different ways.

It's important to remember that

it's okay to not be okay right now.

You can't fix people or solve every problem.

Sometimes the most helpful thing you can do is to say to someone:

it's okay to not be okay right now.

But if someone you know and love seems to be

in a really dark place and doesn't know how to get out,

these resources might just be the lifeline they need.

So check out this webpage, and bookmark it so you'll have it handy.

SCREEN: Sent main screen

I began this message talking about my family.

The greatest lesson I learned from my parents is that

life is about loving and caring for others.

Now more than ever, others need to see this
being practiced by the members of God's family.

This week, when others look at us, may they clearly see
that we have been sent by Christ. Amen. +