

3 OTC.19; Neh 8:2-10; 1Cor 12:12-30; Luke 1:1-21; **with the Bishop's Appeal 2019**

There's an old story that makes its way around church circles from time to time. It seems that someone in the Vatican got word that *the Second Coming of Christ* was about to happen. Within minutes, of course, everyone in the Vatican had heard the rumor and the corridors and offices were crackling with tension and panic.

Finally, one of the cardinals knocked very quietly and very respectfully on the door of the pope's private apartment. "*Your Holiness,*" he said breathlessly, "*we have reason to believe that the Second Coming of Christ is about to happen.*"

What shall we do?"

The Holy Father looked up from his papers & said, "Look busy!"

(Sunday Mornings, Clark, 2 OTC)*

*Yes, indeed, we are **busy** with the day to day ordinary business of life. We have our regular routines and established patterns for just about everything.

We read the same sections of the newspaper or computer screens in the same order day after day. We come to Mass at the same time, park in the same place,

... and sit in the same pew week after week.

We buy the same toothpaste & toast the same kind of bread month after month.

We play the same card games & walk the same golf course with the same friends

... at the same time on the same day of the week year after year.

We eat the same menu from the same dishes every Christmas decade after decade.

No doubt about it, almost the whole of life is a series of habitual routines large and small that are rarely interrupted by anything more drastic than the newspaper's coming late, a technology glitch, or some "stranger" sitting in "our place"

... at the same 5:30/8:00/10:0/12:00 or 2:00 Mass ! ... *stop looking so guilty!*

Our habits & routines are like old familiar shoes, comfortable & comforting.

They get our daily business done, if not the easy or the best way, at least without a lot of thought or stress. And they give us a sense of stability and

“*at-homeness*” which is quite a comfort when the world feels too big & too much for us.

***But there’s another side to our habitual routines** that’s not so pretty, and that is their power *to blind us, to hold us hostage, to make us very poor on the inside.*

Our routines have the power to trap us inside tiny ideas & even tinier hopes.

Our routines have the power to persuade us that this is all there is, **... and that life is very small and very, very narrow.**

Over time, our routines and the endless cycle of everyday tasks that have to be done can persuade us that the best we can hope for is a life of quiet desperation.

That is why we need to hear what Jesus said when he rose in that synagogue in Nazareth to proclaim *not* a past prophecy but the present reality!

2 “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...to bring glad tidings to the poor, liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.*”

Then he said, “**Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.**”

That means is happening right here and right now!

It’s still that ... “TODAY”!

Jesus is reminding us that our lives are meant to be lived this LARGE way.

The Life of Christians ... is the Life of Jesus!

As Paul reminds us today, **“*For in one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free persons, and we were all given to drink of the one Spirit.*”** In that same Spirit who anointed Jesus, **... we Christians are meant to continue what Jesus started.** (Catholic School

Week insert)

Pope Francis explains this in, *The Joy of the Gospel*, “*the Scriptures make it clear that that the Gospel is about the kingdom of God*”...and “*to the extent that [God] reigns within us, the life of society will be a setting for universal fraternity, justice, peace, and dignity*” (EG 180).

In other words, we are to impact, by our lives, the world around us, directly.

What does this look like in our “today”?

In her writings, Teresa of Avila reminds us *that Christ has no body now on earth but ours. No hands, no feet on earth but ours.* We are the Baptized. We are the Body of Christ. We are anointed with the Spirit. We are to fulfill the same

prophesy to *free the oppressed and give sight to the blind, announce good news to the poor.* **Are we up to the challenge?**

In the real world God's love needs physical and tangible expression:

“If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it;

if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.”

Our parish serves as a place for us to gather as *the Body of Christ*. And as that Body we are to continue the mission of Jesus, himself.

Jesus was committed to living out his faith in the real world.

Whatever role we play within the Church, each person participates in

... the priestly, prophetic, and kingly offices of Jesus.

We have many gifts to share and, one way to share these gifts is the Bishop's Appeal that helps: Catholic Charities, Clergy (Seminarians & Deacons) Formation, Justice & Peace Ministry, Christian Formation, and Youth, Young Adult, & Campus Ministry. ***At this Liturgy of Being the Presence,***

... let's don't look BUSY, but be really “BUSY” (do you hear footsteps !!!).

Let's fulfill that divine prophesy in our, *Today!*

And, next weekend will be commitment weekend for the Bishops Appeal

Celebration Our Catholic School C.19; Luke 1:1-21

Part of that Mission of Jesus is happening in our school....

Throughout the halls and classrooms of OLPH School we are *discovering and learning, praying & worshiping*. We learn how science explains much of the world around us through experiments and we use project based learning. We speak to our Middle School about current topics such as Evolution and Outer Space, in the Catholic Christian Tradition, **where *Faith & Science work together***

... to give us a fuller vision of life.

We read great books exploring worlds beyond our personal borders of space and time; **we actively engage our faith, the values & person of Jesus** in our religion classes and by writing our own Stations of the Cross

... to be presented this Year during Lent.

Students throughout the school year have done many activities and projects that use technology in a variety of facets including movie making, essay writing,

presentation planning, & research. **(I was even interviewed!)**

Following Pope Francis we strive to be good stewards to all God's creation caring for our natural world & our society; one service project is the collection of warm coats for the kids at East Lake Elementary School – where you can help too; we will be writing Valentine's Day Cards to our BVM Sisters who cared & taught for so many year here. **It will be a busy week with: *Spirit Day, Student***

Appreciation Day, Nation Day, Vocation Day and National Wear Red Day;

we will have a ***BIG THANK YOU*** to all our volunteers whose help is so critical & appreciated. In November we stocked the food pantry for St Vincent DePaul Society.

Last year we served ten different charities in over 9000 service hours on and off campus.

Is this working? Listen to your words about our school:

"It is such a joy to send our children to a school where they are love, nurtured, academically challenged and where their voices are heard, appreciated and accepted." **And, ...** *"Our teachers are really the most wonderful and most diligent people. Their hearts are open and they have a true understanding of our children."* **I wholeheartedly agree! These seeds of faith will change our world!**

During this ***Catholic Schools Week***, we will celebrate in many ways: But that's not all. We also enjoy watching the ***annual student & faculty volleyball game***

– may the Best Team win!

Yes, we are BUSY with the Mission! Together - We learn, We pray, We serve. And most of all, ***We love***. It was said best by words attributed to St. Francis,

Preach the gospel at all times. If necessary use words!

Thank you for - your presence, your prayers, and your support!
Next weekend will be commitment weekend for *the Bishops Appeal* which helps our parish too!