

In this period of "Ordinary Time" we pray you will discover a new awareness of God's Word and God's love and presence in your lives through these reflections.



Our Lady of the Fields Church
Scriptural Review & Reflections
Saturday & Sunday September 9 & 10, 2017

For more information on any of the parish Faith Enrichment programs contact the Evangelization and Faith Formation Office & Staff or Dr. Little at tlittle@olparish.com

Looking More Deeply into "Called to Missionary Discipleship" (part 1)

I believe St Paul would be very comfortable with Pope Francis' call to the whole church to become, at every level, an evangelizing community of missionary disciples. As we celebrate "Catechetical Sunday" this weekend and read of Paul's call to share the Word with Jew and Greek alike, we are each called to announce and attain what the Pope describes as a "permanent state of mission and discipleship" for us all.

He says the Church must "go forth," boldly taking a first step to draw near to those who do not know or live the Gospel, by building bridges, supporting others, taking on the "smell of the sheep" and patiently seeking to accompany others on their journey to seek and love God. The message we announce must be the "heart of the Gospel," the joyful proclamation that Jesus loves us, gave his life to save us and seeks to live at our side each day to free us from the oppression of sin in our life and to focus us on the challenges we face to know and proclaim the joy of the Gospel in our world, regardless of the threats and dangers of consumerism, complacency, blunted consciences, fear, excuse-making, poverty, violence, relativism, secularist greed, indifference, rationalism false autonomy or spiritual worldliness, all of which threaten to weaken the impulse of missionary renewal in the Church.

The Gospel must not remain private. It is to blossom in each life with a true love of neighbor which transforms us and our lives. He calls us to the "Joy of the Gospel" and to be a Church ready to carry out her mission as salt, light and leaven in our world.

The Acts of the Apostles: A Book for Disciples Chapter 13: "To Jews first and Gentiles also"

In chapter 13, Luke begins a critical turning point in his story and describes an extraordinary journey which take Saul across Turkey and Greece and back again and finally off to Rome itself. As we read of this journey we begin to discover that there is no advance of the gospel without some opposition, sometimes on many sides at once! And in these next chapters Luke reminds us that the Christian mission will indeed require of us a radical transformation of life, something which we have already seen in the early chapters of Acts.

First, like many Jews who went into the Greek world, Saul begins to use a Greek name, Paul. And with Barnabas, as he meets various groups, he discovers the need to adapt their language, customs and missionary approaches to address the varied needs they encounter on their journeys. For example, in the 13th verse of the chapter they leave one Antioch in Syria and arrive in a different Antioch, in Pisidia, in southern Turkey. There, as is the Jews' custom, they are invited to give the assembly. A word of encouragement. That instant gives Paul the opportunity to announce his "Good News" for all to recognize Jesus as the fulfillment of David's promise. And after two weeks in the town he so irritates the Jews that they decide to run them both "out of town," while the Gentiles see the light of God so clearly as their chosen path. The pattern is set. Nothing stands in the way of the Gospel. Even as they are cast out, Barnabas and Paul praise God that the Word is heard and the Spirit is beginning to thrive among the Gentiles.