



from
Jacob's Well

Dear Parishioners,

On this last Sunday before the beginning of Lent we hear the continuation of the “Sermon on the Mount.” He has addressed these teachings to his disciples, which in fact includes us. His words certainly challenge our basic attitudes towards life and what we value. It can be easy to admire the teachings of Jesus without taking them to heart and discerning what that might require of us. When was the last time you prayed for an enemy or turned the other cheek when you were ridiculed or made fun of? Often our gut reaction is to want to retaliate or allow ourselves to become angry.

Jesus then concludes this passage with a seemingly impossible commandment: “Be perfect, just as your Heavenly Father is perfect.” I know that I certainly am not perfect and have yet to meet anyone on earth who is. As humans, we are not capable of perfection on our own. Only through the merciful kindness of our Heavenly Father are we able to grow into the teachings of Jesus. I believe that it is the working of the Holy Spirit that cultivates this desire in us, both as individuals and as a community of believers.

As part of our preparation for the Renew my Church process, our leaders have identified five core values that represent our parish’s highest priorities and are at the heart of what we hope to become. Values in a sense name what we stand for and should guide the decisions and actions we make. Our personal values and the values of a community of faith are two things that can be different and similar at the same time. Our values as a Church are those values which the entire parish values.

The need for corporate or organizational values is clear when we look at the bigger picture. If too many people come together with a different value system, wouldn’t that lead to chaos and division? Personal values are close to our individual sense of self and include what we believe in. These are values that we internalize such as integrity, honesty, and hard work. Our core values as a Church articulate why we exist as a Church and what we hope to accomplish together as the Body of Christ. Naming our core values gives us a focus and direction for our future. These values are supported by the leadership structures of our parish and are brought to life by those who are actively engaged in the pastoral ministry of St. Mary.

Core Values: as the people of Saint Mary of the Annunciation we strive to imitate Mary’s “yes” to God by:

1. Living in an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, bringing the Good News of God’s love and salvation to the world.
2. Cultivating a life rooted in meaningful prayer and sharing in a sacramental life centered on the Eucharist.
3. Participating in life-long formation to grow in holiness and the Christian way of life.
4. Serving with love and compassion those in need while building up a world of justice and peace.
5. Creating a joyful and supportive Catholic community that welcomes all to share in the life of Christ.

Let us pray for one another,

Fr Jerry