

Chaplain's Bulletin May 12, 2024



Dear Folks,

Today we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord. Jesus, after His triumphant resurrection, ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He left us with homework: “Go make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19),” “Go into the world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).” I suggest a critical question for our time is, do people in church see themselves as customers or coworkers in mission?

We have begun praying a prayer for vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, and religious life. The number of priests and religious have been declining for decades, and God willing, we hope to ordain one priest this year, but next year there will be no one. Meanwhile, the rest of us are getting older.

I read from a couple of authors “Never work harder to help someone than they are willing to work to help themselves.” I have had occasions where someone was demanding that something be done, but were unwilling to put forward any action to help make it happen. What would God think of such petitions?

When we talk about action, many immediately focus on encouraging young people to consider vocations. I would suggest a much more critical task is giving them reasons to believe that such vocations are not only worth doing, but worth giving their lives to. What do they see when they look at the people of the Church today? What messages do they receive?

One youth minister said, “Never ask people to choose between God and sports, because God will always lose.” One youth minister said that they had asked the confirmation students, “Why do you want to affirm your faith?” One young man said, “You can be Catholic without it affecting your life. If you’re Baptist you can’t drink or dance, but Catholics can do anything they want.” What messages are they getting?

What do young people see in the adults around them (yes, parents play a huge role, but kids see more than their parents) that tells them that God and the Church are important enough to be worth giving their lives to serve? Do they see a people who dearly love the liturgy, and participate like it is the most important thing they do? Do they see people hungry to learn more about their faith and thirsty to grow in holiness? Do they see people zealous for the mission of the Church, and dedicated to helping the Church accomplish great things?

What if, as we ask God for more vocations, we each examine ourselves? How might we better show in our lives that vocations in the Church are important, worth dedicating one’s whole life?

I believe God has given us what we need to flourish as Church. If we respond well to this moment in history, I’m convinced we can have a bold future.

Blessings,
Fr. Jim