

Chaplain's Bulletin January 25, 2026



Dear Folks,

In our Gospel this week, Jesus starts gathering disciples. We see the call of Peter, Andrew, James, and John, and when He calls them, he calls them to be gatherers.

St. Paul decries the fact that the Corinthian church has broken up into rival factions (see chapter 1 and 3:1-9). Jesus prayed fervently that the Church should be united so that people could believe that Christianity is true (John 17:22-25).

I think the devil laughs himself silly every time he can get Christians fighting each other or working against each other. The word devil comes from the Greek work Diabolos, "the one who tears apart."

The work of the Church, the success of the Church, requires us to be gathered as one that we may help gather others, doing the work of making disciples of all nations. How we respond to this call will make a huge difference in the future of Christianity in America.

I suggest some ongoing homework for 2026:

Prioritizing fixing ourselves over fixing others. This is hard because the great big splinter in your eye looks so much worse to me than the little bitty plank in my eye (Matthew 7:3-5). It requires deliberate focus and continuous effort.

Prioritizing the mission over our own preferences. Part of being community is not always getting things the way we want. With the challenges that the Church faces, things could get less convenient. We shall be required to make sacrifices that we did not expect and would not have chosen. This is part of how God calls us to grow.

Knowing sometimes things won't be done the way we think they should be done. Beyond the question of preferences, sometimes things will be done in a way that we think does not best serve the mission. People will disagree, and this is another form of sacrifice necessary for community to exist. I realized in the seminary that if I waited for the leadership of the Church to do things the way I thought they should be done I would grow old and die waiting. We work with what we have, whatever it is.

Seeing things from other peoples' point of view. This is harder than it sounds. If I am crazy desperate to get the other person to see my point of view and they don't seem to be trying it can be really tough. With practice, we can train and strengthen our capacity to do this. I suggest that doing this one thing could transform our church and our society.

We have much to do in 2026. God is calling us.

Blessing,
Fr. Jim