

HOMILY ~ JANUARY 28/29, 2023

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

***People, people who need people
are the luckiest people in the world.
We're children, needing other children
and you letting our grown up pride
hide all the need inside
acting more like children than children.***

People who need people and people who know they need people are the luckiest people in the world. The Harvard Study of Adult Development followed over 700 men over nearly 80 years. It is the longest study ever done. The study found that relationships by far were the most important factor leading to health, happiness and longevity. If you want to be healthy and happy, invest in your relationships

In the Second Reading, we hear that Jesus picked the foolish, the weak and the lowly rather than the rich, the powerful and the strong to change the world. Jesus came into the world as a poor child from a poor family. Jesus spent most of his public ministry reaching out to the weak and the lowly. Jesus could have reached out to the Jewish religious leaders. If he could convert them, he would have leaders already in place to change the world. I think if I were going to try and change the world, I would probably focus on the people in positions of power; but Jesus did not do that. Jesus reached out to normal people, like you and me, to change the world; and they did. All of the millions of Christians in the world today are Christian because of normal people spreading the good news. The rich and famous come and go, but normal people change the world. I think the first step in being a "normal" person is to acknowledge that you are normal, different but having equal dignity as everyone else. There is nothing wrong with being rich or powerful or famous, as long as you know you are normal. You may have more money than others, you may be more powerful or famous, but that does not make you better than anyone else. If you are "normal," you are also more likely to realize that you need other people. No one accomplishes anything alone, I feel I have accomplished some things in my life so far, but it is because I had parents that loved me, I have siblings and friends that supported me and that I can count on. I have had many teachers and mentors over the years that helped me. I did not do anything alone. I have accomplished things at St. Edith, but I did not do it alone. I have a great Staff, a Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Council and many

Commissions with great ideas. I also have hundreds of volunteers that make things happen. I also have all of you. Without all of you, none of this would matter. We are dependent upon one another and need one another; and together we can change the world.

In the Gospel Reading, we hear the *Beatitudes*. Each *Beatitude* starts with diminishment that leads to abundance. God is with us in the diminishment, and he brings about the abundance. God sometimes works through other people in our lives, and sometimes he works directly in our lives. Sometimes when we are going through a time of difficulty or challenge, we can isolate ourselves. I think we sometimes do this out of a sense of embarrassment or shame. Studies have shown that successful people turn to other people in their lives when they are going through a time of difficulty or challenge. They know that they need people. I have come to realize that to get the abundance in our lives, we have to know that we are dependent upon other people and ultimately dependent upon God. Some examples of this are "*Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.*" Life is sometimes hard, and we are all going to have losses in our lives that we have to mourn, the death of someone we love, the loss of a spouse through divorce. If we isolate, we will be in trouble. When we mourn, we have to reach out to other people and to God. That is how we will get through it. That is why I think our *Grief Share* and *Divorce Care* programs are so important. "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God.*" That is why I think our Catholic Community is so important. We need to realize that life is hard; and if we try to do it alone, we tend to get off track, and we may not get the abundance.

People who need people and know it are the luckiest people in the world. If you want to be happy and healthy, invest in your relationships with other people and with God. If you want to move from diminishment to abundance, know that you are dependent upon other people and ultimately dependent upon God.

Love and Peace,
Fr. Jim