

HOMILY ~ 11th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME JUNE 15/16, 2024

“The bigger the better.” “The more the merrier.” We are all familiar with these sayings, they are very much part of our culture. We know what they mean, but are they true? We like to super-size our fast food. It is bigger, but is it better? When we talk about the economy, for it to be good news must there always be growth? Could maybe it be big enough? We translate that into our material possessions and money. When are we going to have enough? And the more the merrier, just because the majority of people believe something, does that make it right? I am just asking.

In the Gospel Reading, Jesus makes it very clear that we can plant tiny seeds; and they can produce a harvest. We can plant a tiny mustard seed, and it can grow into a bush that birds can live in; but we do not know how this happens. We just plant the seed, and God does the growing. We can nurture the plants a little bit, but God does the growing. It is clear that our job is to plant the seed. We have to leave the growing up to God. This is an important lesson. We have to plant the seed continually, but many times what happens with it is beyond our control.

Every time we bring a child into the world, we are planting a seed. What they eventually become is not up to us. As parents, we sometimes need to let go of what we want them to become. We can help them discover who they are, their strengths and weaknesses, and what God’s plan is for them. If they find that, they will have a good life. When they become adults, we need to let them go. It is important to plant the seeds of faith in our children. We can do that by sharing our faith with them. We can help parents do that when you bring your children to Church, when you bring them to Faith Formation, when you enroll them in our St. Edith Catholic School. I am happy that we have a Catholic School here at St. Edith; and we do what we can to try to make the tuition as affordable as possible, but I know there are families that just cannot afford it. Grandparents, aunts and uncles, maybe you are in a better position to do this. I talk to parents who tell me that they did all of these things, and they are

very saddened that their children do not practice their faith today. Your job is to plant the seed. They will always have that faith foundation. You do not know what will happen.

I have talked to many adults recently in their 50's and 60's who tell me they were away from the Church for a long time, and they are glad they have now found a home at St. Edith. I have to believe that they found their way back, at least partially, because of the faith foundation they got from their parents. Today on Father's Day, think of all of the seeds your father planted over the years and be grateful for the positive lessons he taught you.

We would like to grow as a Parish. When I came here 13 years ago, we had about 1,800 members; and within a few years, we grew to about 2,600. But we have stayed about the same size for a number of years. Maybe we are big enough. Maybe we are the size we are supposed to be. We need to keep planting the seed. Make people feel welcome when they come and plan things that will meet their needs. Welcome the children. Make sure parents know that their children are welcome, even when they act like children. I always say, *"If there is no crying, your parish is dying."* Sometimes we evaluate the success of our Parish programs and activities based upon the attendance. Maybe the people who come are the people who need to be there. Just because the numbers are small does not mean the programs and activities are not worthwhile. We have a number of small groups going at St. Edith. Depending upon the program or activity, the small group is necessary for it to be effective. Remember how the Church started, with Jesus, 12 apostles and an unknown number of women. Today, there are 2.3 billion people who call themselves Christian.

"The bigger the better." *"The more the merrier."* Sometimes that is true, but not always. We have to remember that our job is to plant the tiny seeds, and then turn it over to God. Sometimes we see what happens with that seed, and sometimes we do not. Sometimes we just have to know when we have enough, when we are big enough. We can leave that up to God.

Love & Peace,

Fr. Jim