

HOMILY ~ 25th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME SEPTEMBER 21/22, 2024

Before coming to St. Edith, they called me at St. Priscilla and asked me if I wanted to move here. They said, *“Don’t give us an answer now. Pray about it for a week, and let us know what you decide.”* My immediate reaction was, *“I am not going to move. I do not want to start over again somewhere else at this point. I just got comfortable here. I have hired staff that I really like, and I have started some very good programs. I will pray about it for a week, but I am not moving.”* When I discern things, I talk to people that know me well and that I trust because I think God frequently speaks to me through other people. I asked a couple people what they thought; and both of them said immediately, *“You should definitely take it. It is a bigger parish. They have a school. You will have a younger congregation. You need a new challenge.”* Well that is not what I wanted to hear. I wanted them to tell me to stay put. One of them wanted to write down all of the pros and cons for moving with me, and I just did not want to do that. I was irritated by them. They were challenging me to consider seriously a move, and I did not want to do that.

In the First Reading, we hear that the just one is obnoxious to us. Think of a time when someone told you what they thought you should do; and you knew they were right, but you just did not want to do it. It is obnoxious. You want to tell them to mind their own business; but you know they are right, so they are obnoxious. Did you ever have a discussion with someone when you were on opposite sides of an issue? The other person is making a very good case for their side, and you know they were right. However, it was just more important for you not to admit to them that you were wrong than to be right? Who is obnoxious here? When I was asking friends if I should move to St. Edith, I probably knew on some level that I should make the move. I did not want to listen to them, but I had to consider it at least. I wonder how often we ignore the word of God because it is not something we want to hear. Obnoxious.

In the Gospel Reading, Jesus is trying to tell the Apostles that he is going to suffer and die; and on the third day, he will rise. It was unpleasant, and they did not want to hear about it; they just stopped listening to Jesus, and they changed the subject. They started arguing about who was the greatest. We do that sometimes as well. God is trying to communicate with us, and we just stop listening. God is not giving me what I want, and I am not open to what God has to offer. Everything in our life is pointing in a particular direction, and we just do not want to do it. Suddenly we just do not have time to pray because you do not want what God has to offer.

That is what I did when I first started considering the move to St. Edith. I did not want to move, so I really did not want to listen to Jesus. By that time, I had a practice of praying for 1 1/2 hours in the morning; I was praying, but I did all of the talking. I told God all of the reasons why I did not want to move, and I did not spend any time listening. I think God was working through my friends that I was talking to because they were the reason I started thinking about moving. Sometimes when we discern it is not that God is not giving us direction, we are just not open to that direction.

When we discern what God is calling us to do, we cannot discern in isolation. We need to look at the opportunities that God is bring into our lives. We have to discuss that decision with people that know us well and that we respect. We also have to spend some time listening to God during prayer. Sometimes we just want to tell God what we want, and he should just make that happen for us. This is not the way God works in our lives. He only wants what is best for us, and his ways are better than our ways. So be open to the Lord. If you follow his lead, you will end up in a good place.

Love and Peace,

Fr. Jim