

From the desk of Fr. Tim

An Open Letter to the Men of the Parish

The Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP) weekend is coming up. We have many openings available to the men of the parish. I am wondering why, while at the same knowing that because your life is very full you have a legitimate excuse not to attend.

As I watch you come faithfully to Mass sometimes carrying your children under your arms, I am amazed at your devotion. I know that some of you travel a great many days each week and when you return, you struggle to spend what little time you have with your children. You are tugged in a thousand directions, and yet you do what you do with a sense of joy mixed into your exhaustion. I hate to tell you that you are needed to do something more.

Occasionally folks ask how we have managed to build such a strong parish. The answer that I always give is that it is the strength of the Spirit, empowering our parish community. The bonds of friendship that are built among us is truly what makes our parish strong. But that does not usually happen accidentally. It is especially difficult for men. The rugged individualism that is built into the systems of the men of our culture makes it hard for us to build true friendships. We are certainly far from being able to admit that we need friends. But we do!

This has a lot to do with what CRHP is all about. It is not necessarily for lonely, weak men, in need of companionship. That's not what it is about at all. The fact is that we are all a little lonely or weak and sometimes looking for true friends. But that is still not what CRHP is all about. It is about faith.

Most of us have wondered about the nagging question concerning the importance of our faith. We tend to vacillate a lot when it comes to making our relationship with God something central in our life. We may pray only when we hear the screech of tires behind us or as we mail our income tax return, but God doesn't usually enter our thoughts for more than a few minutes each week. That does not mean that we do not care about him or appreciate what he does. Nor does it mean that we think we do not need him.

He might seem simply like the electricity that comes out of the plug. We are dependent on that for sure, but it is not something we think about much until there is problem. I am not sure we feel good about this situation, but frankly it is not something that we seem to know much about how to fix.

We might even be involved in the church all our life and we still don't think there can be much more to our relationship with our God. If we were allowed to stay in this situation, the church would not be worth very much. It is the job of the church to guide us into a friendship with our loving Father.

This is what CRHP is. It is not the only answer that the church provides. That is far from correct. There are dozens of opportunities for you to enrich your relationship with God.

So, when are you going to make this step, to make your faith something of importance to you? Will it be next month or next year? How long can you put it off? Until your hair turns grey like mine? Remember that your children and your wife depend on your faithful example and guidance. Will they be able to see in you the kind of faith to which God calls us?

Please consider attending the CRHP retreat next weekend. Actually your wife and children want you to go. They are not an excuse. Golf will wait. Heaven will not.

God bless you,

