

From the desk of Fr. Tim

Decide to be Faithful

Train yourself for devotion, for, while physical training is of limited value, devotion is valuable in every respect, since it holds a promise of life both for the present and for the future. This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance. For this we toil and struggle, because we have set our hope on the living God, who is the savior of all, especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things. Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.

(1 Timothy 4:7-12)

It is a good time to direct our attention to our commitment to the Christian Life. Here are some areas where all of us need to make decisions about our involvement.

1. To Offer the Mass

As followers of Jesus Christ, we have an obligation to offer the Mass, to be present and to faithfully participate. When we do this, we are standing at the foot of the cross of Jesus and applying the power of the cross to the needs of our world. Catholic worship is not passive. We do not sit and watch for an hour and then go our way. We bring the world and its needs to the cross, and we turn to the world to speak God's healing word of truth and love. It is an unquestioned duty for every Catholic to be present at Mass every Sunday and every Holy Day of Obligation. It should also be thought of as a powerful tool in the store of every Catholic to be present at weekday Masses whenever it is possible. This is the center of our life.

2. To Teach the Faith

Every Catholic shares in the work of evangelism, of proclaiming the Gospel. We do this primarily by teaching, by telling people about Jesus. It is a work that is directed at every age, from childhood, adulthood and even to old age. We may be catechists or we may be attending a Bible Study Class, in CRHP formation or the Catholic Women's Bible Study, RENEW or we may even be taking a course at the University of Dallas. All that we may be able to do is to read the Bible or study an abbreviated Catechism at home, but, whenever we learn, we are more ready to share our faith.

3. To Serve the Poor

We have dozens of opportunities every year for collecting money or materials for agencies and programs that serve the poor. Again, the bulletin is a good source of information about this. Additionally, ongoing efforts include: the Food Pantry (housed at St. Jude), The Honduras Mission, Habitat for Humanity, Samaritan Inn, Youth Mission Week, Visitation Ministry (to the elderly), Blood Drive, Juliet Fowler Home, Hope's Door, Pro-Life, KOC, City House (for teens), Catholic Charities,

Christmas Giving Tree, Love Truck (furniture and used household items), Catholic Community Appeal, Nursing Home ministry, Bus Ministry to the elderly and the Senior Citizens Monthly Luncheon. Our hope is to expand our work this year to include a major effort to assist refugees from war torn areas of the world such as Somalia, Sudan, Burundi or Iraq. We are also looking for a way, through the Veterans' Hospital, to be involved with supporting our wounded soldiers returning from war. The needs that we have for all this work are very great. Our "Community Service Investigators" are looking for ways for our parish to serve those in need. Watch for news. Get involved. No one else should have to do your part. Jesus, our Lord, told us to care for the poor.

4. To Care for the Parish

Providing for the financial needs of our parish should be approached with discipline, prayer and self-sacrifice. Our job on earth is to learn to love God, and our giving to his church is one of the most important ways. We should pledge, and we should give. Following an understanding of the importance of the tithe (giving ten percent), all of us can give a fair and reasonable amount. As our parish is strengthened financially, we are better able to do God's work.

5. To Confess Our Sins

Reconciliation with God and our neighbor includes using the Sacrament of Penance. It also includes making up for the damage our sins have caused. We do this by prayer, works of mercy and giving alms. Regular use of this sacrament is an essential part of the transformation that God intends for us. Those who are returning to the confessional after a long absence are always welcome.

6. To Pray

A regular prayer life is perhaps the most important way that we experience God's love for us. This includes morning and evening prayer, participating in the liturgical life of the parish and finding ways to grow spiritually. There are retreats in the area especially at Montserrat and the Jesuit retreat house. In our parish the 'Christ Renews His Parish' retreat program is one of the most powerful ways to strengthen or begin a life of prayer. The primary place to find out about what is going on is this bulletin. The Newcomers' Guide has a more complete description of the above lists. Or, call the main parish number during working hours. Hope will answer the phone and she will direct you to the right person to help you get involved. May God pour out his grace to make you a faithful Catholic.