

During the opening faculty and staff meetings at King School this year, the new head of school, Dr. Karen Eshoo, invited everyone to participate in a brief but interesting exercise of seeing where others on the staff and faculty worked. The entire staff was divided into groups. Each person in one's group would show the rest of the group where their work was done. Chemistry teachers showed off the cache of chemicals in their rooms. Lower School teachers identified the various "stations" within their rooms for various activities. The IT people showed off the various servers supporting the school. The grounds crew waved their arms to convey that the fields, plantings, and buildings were all a part of their purview. You get the picture. It was a helpful activity in understanding--however briefly and casually--the lives and activities of others who were all critical to the vibrancy of the school.

I think that such a practice would be a wonderful thing for parishes to do from time to time. Again, the venture allows one to see the various ways that others engage their lives. Each practice may differ markedly from the others, but all activities are important for the various individuals in making sense of life and critical to the makeup of the community. Indeed, peering ever so briefly into how people engage in life through work or commitments often gives a greater appreciation for them and a greater awareness of the multitude of ways of making a life. The crucial connection with the King School activity is that all the activities are critical to the vibrancy of the parish.

This Sunday, October 28, many in the Protestant tradition will observe Reformation Sunday. This is a time to remember Martin Luther nailing the 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany, ostensibly beginning the Protestant Reformation(s). (The hammer shot heard round the world, if you will.) While we at St. Francis will observe the 23rd Sunday after Pentecost, the legacy and import of the Continental Reformation cannot be overstated for the development of Anglican practice and theology. While the English Reformation developed later and possessed different emphases, the impact of what Luther and other Reformers achieved was not lost on their counterparts in England.

What the Reformers achieved was not simply a radical break from the existing Roman Catholicism of the time. Rather, in the eyes of many, Luther and his counterparts were recovering many aspects of the Christian tradition that were lost to the abuses of the Church over time. Indeed, the Council of Trent starting in 1545 was the Roman Catholic Church's response to the Reformation and the adoption of various elements that the reformers raised, on Catholic terms, of course, but, nonetheless the council stands as proof that the Church had lost its way.

One area in which the church had gone astray was in the understanding of the body of Christ. More to the point, the Reformers recovered the viewpoint that all people--regardless of sex, race, economic station, etc.--were members of the body of Christ. The fascination by Rome at the

time with priests and bishops impeded this perspective. While some Reformation groups became anti-clerical and iconoclastic, there were many who accepted the importance of priests and bishops to the life of the work of God in the world and simply added that everyone else also has a critical role to play! Indeed, the recovery of baptism as the place of entrance into the Christian community became a way of understanding that all the baptized had been ordained. Indeed, Luther called it the priesthood of all believers. Some were called to ministry in the Church but others to ministry as a parent or ministry as a cobbler or ministry as a farmer or ministry as a cook or ministry as a doctor. The connection to where we started this piece? The lives and activities of others were all critical to the vibrancy of the Church. And no one activity is greater or lesser than the other. As Paul's exhortation to the early Christian community using the body as an example underscores, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you.'"

Thus, our work in the world is, in part, to recognize the various ministries that go on every second of every hour of every day. And to recognize the multifaceted nature of ministry. It happens in so many places that we may not always look. What we take away from such awareness is that we are not islands. Rather, we are interconnected and depend upon each other. Indeed, the vibrancy of our community depends upon the activities of so many. On this Reformation Sunday, we give thanks for the priesthood of all believers. Thus, we give thanks for you.