



## Our Lady of Perpetual Help

### DISCIPLESHIP WEEKLY

(Taken from *Divine Renovation* by Fr. James Mallon)

#### *Welcoming the Stranger*

On November 12, 2013, Pope Francis preached a weekday homily on the parable of the wedding feast told by St. Matthew (22: 1 - 14). The pope made two essential points. The first was that when we gather for the Eucharist, or anytime we gather as a Church, we are responding to an invitation to a party, and a party is always a joyful experience. The second point was that in the parable, the servants are instructed to go to the highways and byways to bring in the good, the bad and the marginalized.

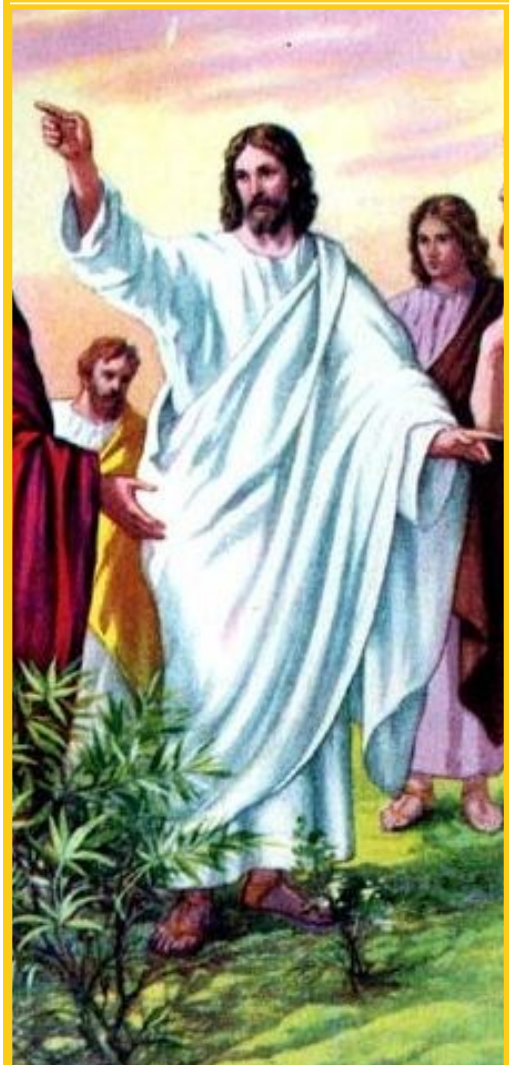
A wonderful way to measure just how hospitable our parishes are to the marginalized is to measure the sense of security that exists in our churches on a Sunday morning. I once heard a pastor at a conference say that he realized his church had become a safe “club” for a group of like-minded people when he saw parishioners walking around and leaving purses and handbags in the pews. He concluded that if there is no risk that someone might steal your purse in church, then we are not truly welcoming the marginalized. He commented that if there is no one in our churches who drops the occasional swear word, then we are not welcoming to the marginalized, but attracting a group of like-minded people. One weekend later, after a particular Mass, a parishioner who is one of God’s “little ones” came to me a little frustrated, as she was unable to find the drop-off box for one of our charity drives to help the poor in our area. “Father,” she asked in a loud voice, “where the #@\$& am I suppose to leave this?” I almost had a heart attack. I did gently remind her about where she was, then laughed to myself as I remembered the pastor’s words of the week before. Remember what Pope Francis says: that the Church exists for the most marginalized. We are called to be fishers of people (Luke 5:10). Anyone who has ever gone fishing knows that there is a big difference between the flapping, smelly, slimy creature that is caught, and the fish that is served upon a plate, complete with a slice of lemon.

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- How are we welcoming the marginalized at OLPH?
- Do we know what it is like to be lost?
- Are you ready to ‘drop your nets’ and follow Jesus?
- Preparing for Next Sunday.

#### Special points of interest

- Bringing about Jesus in our everyday lives.
- Get a jump start on next Sunday’s Mass by reflecting on the Scripture Readings. “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.”



# The Great Story of Jesus

## ACT IX:

### The Life of Discipleship

Taken from *Forming Intentional Disciples* by Sherry Weddell



The new disciple is now ready to begin a lifetime of following Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit in the midst of his Church for the sake of the world. Newly baptized Sara Silbergers speaks for many who have newly crossed into the world of relationship with God and discipleship:

I wish that lifelong Christians, especially lifelong Catholics, could understand just for a minute what it is like to be lost. Maybe they would be less afraid to evangelize. It may be hard to explain... Before I started this process, I thought of myself as a happy person, reasonably confident, proud of my life and how I lived it. It's not like I saw myself as stumbling around in a pit. But from where I stand now, wow.

It was so different, so lonely. People talk about real Catholic discipleship as a lonely road - I do too sometimes - and it is frustrating, and stupid, and there is no good reason for it to be like that. But being without God is a different, deeper kind of being alone. I wouldn't even have known to call it lonely, because there isn't any concept that someone else should be there.

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**WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GREAT STORY OF JESUS?**

**ACT VIII: DROPPING THE NET**

**JOIN FR. GREG SCHLARB TUESDAY**

**MAY 9, 2017 IN RHOADY LEE**

**FROM 7:00PM TO 8:00PM**

**FOR A PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION .**

## Thresholds of Conversion: Intentional Discipleship

Taken from *Forming Intentional Disciples* by Sherry Weddell

Once our friend has passed through the thresholds of pre-discipleship, she will come to the point where a final decision whether or not to follow Jesus is required of her. You cannot seek forever. The disciples on the Emmaus road expressed it as “Did not our hearts burn within us...? (Luke 24:32). We might say, “I can’t NOT do this!” The point is that a human being reaches the moment where - with complete freedom - she chooses to sell all she has to purchase the Pearl of Great Price and become a follower of Christ (see Matthew 13: 45 - 46).

This is as far from a passive act as a person can get. It requires a searching and deliberate act of the will. That is why the prior journey through the thresholds is so vital. Everything has prepared us for and led us to this moment of decision. The convert is arriving at the point where he is willing to do what Simon, Peter, James and John did:

(Jesus) said to Simon: “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.” And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish, which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men.” And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him. (Luke 5: 4 - 11)

Dropping your nets and taking the first steps into the world of intentional discipleship is, then, a supremely active choice. Catholic friends, family, and the parish community play a critical role in helping individuals, whether already baptized or not, make this life-changing decision.

**NEXT MONTH: BREAK THE SILENCE**

Prepare Yourself for Next Sunday's Mass

*May 14, 2017*  
*Fifth Sunday of Easter*

*First Reading: Acts 6: 1 - 7*

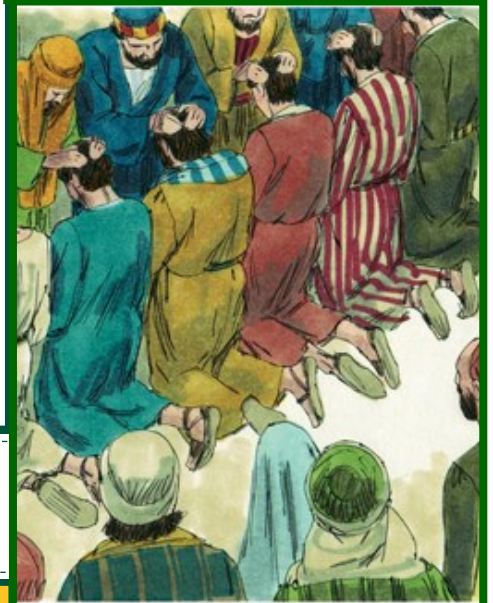
*Responsorial Psalm: 33: 1 - 2, 4 - 5, 18 - 19*

*“Lord, let your mercy be on us,  
 as we place our trust in you.”*

*Second Reading: 1 Peter 2: 4 - 9*

*Gospel: John 14: 1 - 12*

The selection of the first Deacons



*Jesus is my way, truth, and life because . . .  
 I am his way, truth and life when. . .*

Going Deeper to Understand the Gospel

On several of these Easter Sundays we hear from “The Last Discourse.” The section of John’s Gospel where Jesus, the beloved teacher, shares his Last Supper with his disciples. As he tells them he is about to leave them for a while, they are afraid, uncertain what this means. What follows in the discourse is a dialogue between Jesus and his disciples. Their fears reveal a lack of understanding about Jesus. When Thomas protests, “Master, we do not know where your are going, how can we know the way?” Jesus replies, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” And in knowing Jesus, the disciples have met the Father. Well Philip is more confused, “Just show us the Father,” he says, “and everything will be okay.” Jesus chides Philip, after all this time hasn’t he learned that “I am in the Father and the Father is in me?” Now, The Last Discourse, is more than an after-dinner speech by Jesus, it’s a chance for the early Church to present the struggle of Christians in any age. Like the disciples, like many who followed them, we may fear being orphaned. We may wish for the “good ole days,” when Jesus walked with his disciples and there was nothing to fear. Christians ever since have coped with problems not covered in the teachings left by the apostles. In every age, we must relearn that Jesus is the Word made flesh who welcomes us into his intimate relationship with the Father. In next Sunday’s Last Discourse selection, Jesus promises his Spirit as Comforter and Teacher. These Easter texts are a short course in the basics of our faith. For in Jesus’ own words, “Amen, amen I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.”

I am the way, the truth,  
 and the life.

