

St. Joseph Catholic Church *in Port Aransas, TX on Mustang Island*

Words to Ponder: Messages

7.12.09: Father Xaviour

“This morning, I’m going to tell you an old story.

“A mother pounded on her son’s door for Mass. ‘It’s time to go to Mass.’

“‘No, I don’t want to go!’

“The mother and his sister persisted. ‘You have to go!’

“‘No,’ the son insisted. ‘The people don’t like me. Besides, I don’t feel well.’

“To which the mother said, ‘You’re forty years old, and you’re the pastor there.’

“[Pope Benedict has declared] June 19, 2009—the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus—[through June 19, 2010] the year of the priest.”

“It’s been a long time [since] the focus has been on the messenger, not on the message.

“[A] priest is the preacher of the gospel, the animator of the gospel. [Parishioners are] invited to show [their] appreciation through building better relations with their pastor. Vocations need more attention.

“Today, [we are here] together to celebrate our faith through the beautiful gospel.

“Twelve men were sent out... with the great project of Jesus to transform the world..., to create a new Jerusalem, to help others to see God’s will, [to help us see as] angels see, [and to experience the] same peace [here] on earth.

The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the ‘birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches’ (Matthew 13:31).

“Jesus wanted to expand the company [of] twelve men [so that others might] hear him, see him, love him. [He is] calling [each of us to him].

“St. Paul in 1 Corinthians says that God chooses what’s weak to shame the wise.”

[“Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong” (1 Corinthians 1:27).]

“Jesus [sent] twelve ordinary men [to preach among the people] for two reasons. First, [he wanted] the mission and the ministry of the kingdom [to] go on so [that] his mission and his ministry [were] in accordance [with God’s will. Jesus knew that] the fury of the world [would] consume his life, so he [prepared] these men. Today the media is used to following the messenger [around]. In Jesus’s time, [he had only] his faithful disciples. You and I are living the book of Jesus.

“Second, the mission and the ministry of God’s kingdom [was for the disciples] to go out when Jesus was in the flesh, [and] the mission and the ministry [were] in one place. [The faith of the people was] strengthened [when they witnessed Jesus and the disciples] preach the gospel and heal the world.

“[In today’s] gospel, [we read that Jesus told his disciples], ‘Don’t take anything. Just go with a walking stick.’ That’s the way any priest is placed in society.

“In the first reading..., the prophet Amos is told, ‘Go to other lands [to prophesy. Don’t do it here’]. Sometimes when missionaries go to other lands, they’re told to go away. ‘You’re not wanted here.’ A missionary isn’t invited [to other places]. He’s sent on the mission with one consoling word: ‘Those who receive you, receive me; and those who receive me, receive you.’

“Some consider religious leaders to be parasites. A child stays in the womb for nine months, but the mother never considers her child a parasite. [On the other hand,] a missionary’s life is worthless and meaningless. To be dependent is very difficult. To be a missionary is to be dependent on others.

“This is why Pope Benedict named this the year of the priest, to strengthen the bond [among us] so [that] young kids can know the joy of the priest, to consider the walk of our footsteps.

“Continue to pray for priests to inspire us, to strengthen our faith, to empower us so that faith may be meaningful in our lives.”

Father, thank you for revealing your mind to me. By your Spirit, help me to grasp your wisdom more deeply—and to proclaim it to everyone I meet today! (the Word among us, July 2009, p. 31).

Link of interest...

✓ Year for priests... <http://www.usccb.org/yearforpriests/index.shtml>