



From the desk of Father Rich Yanos

Today we celebrate the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Our first reading comes from the Book of Job which is a long parable which grapples with why bad things happen to good people. This question was especially crucial to people of that time because they didn't believe in life after death, and therefore one received reward or punishment in this life. Job has lost his children, his property, and his health, and he lives at the city dump. In this passage, he gives an understandably pessimistic evaluation of life.

In our second reading from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul's enemies frequently criticize him for the least little thing. At a time when most teachers received compensation from those they instructed, Paul was criticized because he refused financial support from the community. Because of this, they discredited him as not being a legitimate apostle. Today we hear his response.

Please Make Your Gift to the 2024 Annual Catholic Appeal

Together at the table

Next week is Commitment Sunday for the 2024 Annual Catholic Appeal in the Archdiocese of Chicago. This year's theme is Together at the table. The theme draws together three important movements at work in the Church today: the call to synodality or walking together on the road with Jesus and each other, the call to the national Eucharistic Revival or coming to the table and altar of the Lord's sacrifice, and—finally—the call to continue fostering together the spiritual revitalization of our parishes.

The ministry of Jesus and his saving death and resurrection were directed to bringing us together at the table of his heavenly Father in the Kingdom. That movement of his mission and ministry is evident in today's gospel. In this year of Mark's gospel, today's passage is drawn from chapter one and describes in a snapshot a typical day in the life of Jesus. He is immersed in the lives of broken people who are ill, like Peter's mother-in-law, people who were dominated by evil spirits, people who needed a word of hope, the good news. Jesus cures the sick, casts out demonic spirits, and he proclaims the good news. In all their needs, the people come together and cluster around Jesus. And he heals them and brings them together, ultimately, to his table of blessing.

The Annual Catholic Appeal enables us to be together with Jesus and with each other as we serve the needs of others. The Appeal is one important path to forge a way to bring people together at the table, people who might otherwise be excluded or remain on the margins.

We are called to offer our financial support, our prayerful support, and our direct involvement in the Church's outreach. In other words, we are called to be generous in sharing our time, talent, and treasure. Through the Appeal, we can support parishes in need, Catholic schools, programs of religious education, and Archdiocesan initiatives, for example, that foster respect for life, that seek to make peace and prevent violence, and that train leaders for our faith communities.

There are envelopes and brochures available for you in the back of church for you to take on your way out. Across the next week, reflect, pray, and ask yourself how you can help bring people together at the table by supporting your brothers and sisters who make the journey with you. Consider as concretely and specifically as you can how your contribution of time, talent, and treasure will help you to do this. Prepare to make a commitment next weekend.

The Eucharist we are about to celebrate gathers us together at the Lord's table, the altar of his Eucharistic sacrifice. It is a foretaste of that heavenly feast when, one day, by God's grace will be forever together with the Lord and each other.

As the Annual Catholic Appeal launches next weekend, I wanted to share with you the impact your gift—no matter the size—has on this important effort. The work supported by the Appeal is more important than ever. Gifts to the Annual Catholic Appeal directly support the necessary work of parishes, Catholic schools, and vital ministries throughout the archdiocese. You can make your gift to the Annual Catholic Appeal online at annualcatholicappeal.com, or you can choose to send in the response envelope from the Cardinal's letter you may have received earlier in January. Thank you for supporting our parish.

Many families in our parish have already received the Annual Catholic Appeal mailing from Cardinal Cupich. On behalf of those served by the ministries, parishes and schools who receive funding from the Appeal, we thank you for your gifts. Please return your response as soon as possible. The Annual Catholic Appeal offers a wonderful opportunity to answer the call "Together at the table." We encourage giving at all levels to support this initiative. In addition to providing for ministries and services throughout the archdiocese, the Annual Catholic Appeal funds services in our own parish.

When we financially support the work of our parish, our archdiocese, and the Catholic Church throughout the world, we experience a feeling of deep gratitude, especially when we contemplate God's many gifts to us personally. By sharing our wealth through gifts to the 2024 Annual Catholic Appeal, we demonstrate our commitment to the Church and each other.

Fr. Rich Yanos

