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My dear parishioners:

Throughout the weeks of Ordinary Time this year we will be reading from the Gospel According to Saint Mark. Unlike the gospels of Matthew and Luke which have the lengthy Sermon on the Mount (Plain in Luke), in Mark's gospel the major form of Jesus' teaching is through parables. Allow me to give a brief overview of the significance of parables so that as we listen to Jesus speaking in this way we will have an understanding of why he did so, and what is expected of us as we listen to his words.

At the time of our Lord it is estimated that 90% of the population was illiterate, not able to read or write. Teaching was done by word of mouth. Because it is difficult for people to memorize long lists of facts (recall there were 613 precepts in the Law of Moses that every Jew was bound to but no common Jew could remember), rabbis most often taught people by use of stories.

There were two main forms of story-telling at the time of Jesus: example stories and parables. Example stories were meant to clarify a specific existing teaching. Parables were meant to introduce a new teaching. Jesus was a master parable story teller.

There are three dimensions to a parable. The first is called the **orientation**. This is the beginning of the parable. Jesus sets the story in such a way that orients the listener to something they already know and understand. The listener would be in full agreement with Jesus at this point and feel connected to the story and to Jesus. Using the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the orientation statement is "A man has two sons." The Jewish listeners would know all that goes into having sons. All the issues of parental respect, inheritance, family honor, etc., would immediately come to the mind of the listener.

The second dimension of the parable is called the **disorientation**. Here Jesus adds a twist to the story that throws the listener off guard. In the parable of the Prodigal Son it is the younger son demanding a share of the inheritance of his living father and the father giving it to him. This would confuse the Jewish listener for no son should ever make such a demand and no father should ever agree to it. Here Jesus seems to be casting aside all the precepts of the law and culture of the time. Now everything the listener thought they knew is being put aside. This leaves the listener confused and vulnerable.

The third dimension of the parable is the **new orientation**. Here Jesus gives an end to the story that demands a new way of looking at old issues and established values. In the Prodigal Son parable it is the wayward son returning to the father after having shamed the family, and being welcomed back with open arms and deep love. This never would have happened under the Mosaic law. Jesus is giving a new and radical way of looking at the power of mercy and forgiveness.

Parables often do not have a definitive ending, as listeners are left with the dilemma as to whether they are going to be willing to embrace a new way of being faithful to God, by following the teaching of Jesus. The Prodigal Son parable ends with the listener not knowing if the older son will accept the return of his brother and enter the party in his honor. The listener is left with the lingering question, "What would I do?"

Parable reading is not casual reading. We will miss the importance and the value of Jesus' teaching for us if we listen to the parables with a sense of our already knowing all there is to know about the parable. We, like the first listeners of Jesus, need to allow ourselves to be **disoriented** by Jesus' teaching, so that we can be **oriented anew** by God's amazing grace.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Frank H. Rossi, Pastor

**January 27 - February 4, 2018
 Readings and Mass Intentions**

Saturday, January 27 4:30pm—Vigil Mass
 NO Spanish Mass

2 Sm 12:1-7a, 10-17/Ps 51:12-13, 14-15, 16-17 [12a]/
 Mk 4:35-41

Sunday, January 28 9:00am—Mass
 Dt 18:15-20/Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9, [8]/1 Cor 7:32-35/Mk 1:21-28

Mass intention for the People of the Parish

Monday, January 29 4:30pm—Mass
 2 Sm 15:13-14, 30; 16:5-13/Ps 3:2-3,4-5,6-7 [8a]/Mk 5:1-20

Tuesday, January 30 No Mass
 2 Sm 18:9-10, 14b,24-25a,30-19:3/Ps 86:1-2,3-4,5-6[1a]/
 Mk 5:21-43

Wednesday, January 31 4:30pm—Mass
 2 Sm 24:2,9-17/Ps 32:1-2,5,6,7[cf. 5c]/Mk 6:1-6

Thursday, February 1 8:30am—Mass
 1 Kgs 2:1-4,10-12/1 Chr:29:10,11ab,11d-12a, 12bcd[12b]/
 Mk 6:7-13

Friday, February 2 9:30am—Communion Service
 Mal 3:1-4/Ps 24:7,8,9,10[10b]/Heb 2:14-18/Lk 2:22-40 or
 Lk 2:22-32

Saturday, February 3 4:30pm—Vigil Mass
 6:30pm—Spanish Mass

1 Kgs 3:4-13/Ps 119:9,10,11,12,13,14 [12b]/Mk 6:30-34

Mass intention for the People of the Parish

Sunday, February 4 9:00am—Mass
 Jb 7:1-4,6-7/Ps 147:1-2,3-4,5-6[cf. 3a]/1 Cor 9:16-19,22-23/
 Mk 1:29-39

Mass intention for Gene Broussard

**If today you hear his voice, harden not
 your hearts. (Ps 95)**

If you have previously blessed
 palms at home and would like to
 donate them for this year's ashes
 please bring them and put them in
 the basket in the entrance of the
 church.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for: Nelda Leathem, Annie Jacobs, Maureen Peltier, Denise Vohsen; Marilyn Polaskie, Linda Passon, Donna Crookes

Repose of the soul: Anita Chavis

Names will remain on the prayer list for two weeks. You may list names in the Prayer book in the vestibule of the Church and your intention will be offered at daily Mass.

Weekly Stewardship

January 20 & 21 Weekly Offertory \$ 3,237.00
 Average Weekly Cost \$ 3,152.00
 Excess/Deficit \$ 85.00

Sun.	Jan 28	Mon.	Jan 29	Tues.	Jan 30	Wed.	Jan 31	Thurs.	Feb 1	Fri.	Feb 2	Sat.	Feb 3
4th Sunday in Ordinary Time 8:00-8:45 Divine Mercy Chaplet & Eucharist Adoration 9:00am—Mass Adult Faith Formation after Mass		4:30pm—Mass				4:00pm—Rosary 4:30pm—Mass 6:00pm—CCE 7:00pm—RCIA		8:30am—Mass 9:00am—Divine Mercy Chaplet		9:30am—Communion Service		3:45-4:15 Confession 4:30—Vigil Mass 6:30pm—Spanish Mass	
Sun.	Feb 4	Mon.	Feb 5	Tues.	Feb 6	Wed.	Feb 7	Thurs.	Feb 8	Fri.	Feb 9	Sat.	Feb 10
5th Sunday in Ordinary Time 9:00am—Mass Adult Faith Formation after Mass		4:30pm—Mass		10:00am—Senior Social & Bingo 11:30am—First Tuesday Mass 12:00pm Lunch 1:00pm—Altar Society Meeting		4:00pm—Rosary 4:30pm—Mass 6:00pm—CCE 7:00pm—RCIA		8:30am—Mass 9:00am—Divine Mercy Chaplet		9:30am—Communion Service		4:45-5:15 Confession 5:30pm—Bilingual Mass 7:00pm—Mardi Gras Party	

**Adult Faith Formation Classes
 Sundays after Mass**

4 Signs of Dynamic Catholics by Matthew Kelly
 Led by Madeline Arnett

RCIA

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
 Wednesdays at 7:00pm

Lent

Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2018

4:30pm—Mass and Distribution of Ashes
 7:00pm—Mass and Distribution of Ashes



Stations of the Cross
 every Friday 5:30pm

**CCE Parents and ALL Adults
 are invited to attend**

**The Bible and the Sacraments Class
 offered on Wednesdays in the
 Family Center from 6:30 to 7:45pm**

SAVE THE DATE!!

**MARDI GRAS PARTY
 FEBRUARY 10, 2018**

7:00PM—10:00PM
 GUMBO AND "FIXINGS"
 DJ ~ DANCING ~ PHOTO BOOTH
 CROWNING OF THE COURT
 \$10/SINGLE,
 \$25/FAMILY OF 3 OR MORE

CCE classes

Wednesdays at 6:00pm

Help is needed to provide meals for the children before class, like spaghetti, sandwiches, pizza or chicken nuggets. Contact Twyla Darder at 409-384-0819 or vjtd1283@windstream.net.