

***Seek the LORD while he may be found, call him while he is near***

When I read these words from the prophet Isaiah, I found myself wondering, "When is there a time when God can't be found, or is not near?" In my early days of Seminary training, I remember learning about the religious philosophy called "deism." Deism is sometimes described as the "clockwork universe theory," in which a god designs and builds the universe, but steps aside to let it run on its own. As Catholic Christians we reject that philosophy because it stands in contradiction to our fundamental belief in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, who even in his ascension, promised to be with us always. So how do we understand the words of Isaiah, which allude to a possible distance from God?

Isaiah's words are an admonition to cultivate and strengthen our faith when we are feeling close to God. Not that God is ever distant, but we do have our "mountain top" experiences when we feel closer and our "dry desert" moments when we feel distant. Furthermore, when we are feeling good, or are content and are not too burdened by life's problems, we don't feel the need to seek the Lord. A failure to recognize how blessed we are when we are content does not serve us well when we find ourselves in desolation. Deepening our awareness of God's presence in our lives is necessary so that when we are overcome with the feelings of doubt, fear, and abandonment, we can find comfort in our experiences of the times when we did know God's presence. It is important too for us to reflect on times of challenge, so that we can become aware of God's presence even in our darkest of days. In those cases, we find ourselves looking back and realizing that we would not have made it through those times without the Lord's presence, even if we did not recognize him at the time.

**CATECHETICAL SUNDAY** - This weekend marks our annual celebration of Catechetical Sunday. This is an important opportunity to reflect on the role that each person plays, by virtue of Baptism, in handing on the faith and being a witness to the Gospel. On Catechetical Sunday we are all called to rededicate ourselves to this mission as a community of faith. This year's theme, taken from the 28<sup>th</sup> verse of the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew's gospel is "**Come to me all you who labor and are burdened**". This year's theme reminds us of the invitation we receive from the Lord Jesus to follow Him and the promise that He doesn't want to add to our burdens; he wants to lighten them.



Who are the catechists of our parish? They are, of course, those who volunteer to teach in our Faith Formation Program, Baptism ministry, Pre-Cana, and the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults programs. They are not alone however, in the catechetical mission. At the end of the Rite of Baptism, the blessing prays that the parents of the child, "May, by word and example, prove to be the first witnesses of the faith to their children." Beginning with parents and extending to all the faithful, we are all catechists. Today we give thanks for those who have passed the faith on to us and we make a commitment to continue

our own faith formation so that we may be the catechetical evangelists the Lord calls us to be.

**CONGRATULATIONS SISTER CAROL** – This month, Sister Carol Radosti OP, co-coordinator of Parish Social Ministry, celebrates 60 years of religious life as a Sister of Saint Dominic. In her service to our parish, Sister Carol not only continues to be faithful to her religious profession but carries on the ministry of the Dominican Sisters who have served this parish since its beginning. Our parish gives thanks for the blessing of Sister Carol.

**NARTHEX RENOVATION** – This week we began a project that will provide our church vestibule with some additional gathering space. What has served as a library/confessional is being renovated for this purpose. It is our intention to eventually renovate the church confessionals to make them more usable. A temporary reconciliation chapel has been set up on the west side of the narthex.

Peace,