

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – JUNE 17, 2018

Dear Families and Parishioners,

Pope Francis has written three Apostolic Exhortations. These are not doctrinal mandates but rather words of strong encouragement and insight by a very pastoral Pope. The theme of all these exhortations is joy in the Lord who is present with us in this journey of life. The three exhortations are: *The Joy of the Gospel*, *The Joy of Love*, and *Rejoice and Be Glad*.

In today's bulletin you will find the excerpted fifth chapter of the Pope's third exhortation *Rejoice and Be Glad*. This repeats the theme of last week in which we talked about the evil spirit and how we pray the Our Father that God would deliver us from this evil one. Then Pope Francis discusses **discernment**, the important gift of the Holy Spirit as each individual makes his or her way through life's jungle.

Today's Gospel takes us back to Pope Francis first exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*. God is working for us night and day even though we are oblivious to the Lord's actions. Here is the passage from *The Joy of the Gospel*.

“God's word is unpredictable in its power. The gospel speaks of a seed which, once sown grows by itself, even as the farmer sleeps. (Mark 4: 26-29). The Church has to accept the unruly freedom of the word, which accomplishes what it will in ways that surpass our calculations and ways of thinking.” #22, *The Joy of the Gospel*.

The second Gospel parable today follows the first. The mustard plant comes from a very small seed and this is often scattered by the wind so the plant becomes as common as a weed. This plant, *Brassica nigra*, can grow up to eight or nine feet so that the birds of the air can hide or take shade in its branches. The plant grows everywhere and its crushed seeds are often used as a condiment to give food special flavor.

Simply said, the Kingdom of Heaven can grow in the human race wherever God wills, become large and shelter many people, and its fruit can flavor our life. Christ uses a plant that is as common as a weed as a sign for the Kingdom of Heaven, God's unpredictable power, and a taste of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Father's Day

The second part of the prayer Our Father, could be taken as a synopsis for the father of a family. May the father supply the bread for the family, be the first to forgive when mistakes are made, be the leader of the family taking them from the tempting parts of the world, and keep the family from the wiles of the devil. Good fathers offer their family the best opportunity of a gracious and positive growth and life.

Today we commend fathers of families who together with their spouses are gardening a joyous family. What fathers and mothers have begun, grandparents and great-grandparents support and guide with their wisdom.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.
June 17, 2018