



Convocation of Parish Leaders

EVANGELIZING MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

DIocese OF CROOKSTON / NOV. 30 – DEC. 1, 2018 / DIocese OF FARGO



This past weekend, 750 members from the Diocese of Fargo & the Diocese of Crookston, MN gathered in Fargo at the Avalon Events Center to discuss a topic that is plaguing our world today, “Evangelization.” Bishop Folda & Bishop Hoepfner from each diocese addressed the faithful about a crisis that is taking place in America, that is, a lack of zeal for the faith. The Keynote speakers for the day were Fr. Frank Donio & Msgr. Tom Richter. These two keynote addresses were about the URGENT NEED to witness to the Gospel, and not being afraid to live our faith. They challenged the faithful to not be afraid to pray before, during, & the end of any endeavor to spread the Gospel. Fr. Donio told us that evangelization is dependent upon the Holy Spirit as it took the fire in the Upper Room to get the Apostles fired up about the faith, and they were spread throughout the world. He continued to encourage the faithful to continue to present others with an encounter with the Lord, & to accompany them on their journey with the intention of leading others in a community of faith. At every Mass, we too need to encounter the Lord in the Eucharist, & in His Word as we gather as a community of faith as we are sent into the world to our families, friends, & co-workers. As we go, we are called to pray & focus on the fruits of our labors. Msgr. Richter described four ways to evangelize; 1st - to pray about who we are going to invite; 2nd - we are to pray for them and the need that their hearts will soften; 3rd - it is then that we are ready to reach out and befriend them. This step is all about building a relationship with them and doing the things that we love to do. Finally, once we befriend them, we are to accompany them and walk with them. These are the four steps to get us to go out & seek those who have lost their way. He continued and said that “a heart that is close to Christ is the evangelizer.” Last weekend, we heard in the homily how disturbing the statistics in the church have been over the past 25 to 50 years as many have left & never returned. Bishop Folda stated, “that without evangelization, we are dead.” He challenged the faithful to not be afraid to live the gospel, because “you will open doors to hearts that your pastor cannot open.” He said the challenge is to get over the attitude of maintaining status quo. He said evangelization should “trump maintenance. If we live the gospel, maintenance will happen.” Bishop Folda continued & said, “Be Real with others. We cannot carry on the way we have been going.” Families are not living the faith of parents and grandparents, and we cannot assume that they are registering at our parishes. Bishop Folda continued & said, “Whoever wants our young people the most will get them; they will compete for them.” He concluded by challenging the priests and faithful to go out and not be afraid. He said, “the apostles did not stay in the Upper Room. They were driven out by the spirit to the rural areas of the world.” As each of us is called to invite others, we must remain faithful & remember that if we can’t give one hour a week to the Lord; we have to ask the question, do I really love the Lord?

St. Philip Neri Delegates at the Convocation of Parish Leaders:

(Left to Right) Fr. Pfeifer, Jackie Weigel, Tanya Schneider,
Carol Baumgartner, Deacon Allen Baumgartner, Lucas Martin.

(Not Pictured) Rich Gross, Zach Howick, & Deacon Gary Schumacher



If Jesus paid the price for my **sin,
then why do I have to suffer here and now?**

Every single sin has at least three effects: It offends God, it offends man, and it offends nature. Each of the ones offended forgives differently. God forgives immediately and always; man forgives usually, but it takes time; nature forgives very slowly, if at all.

Here's an example: If, one day, I were so bored that I cut off my arm just for fun, I would commit the sin of self-mutilation. Once I have taken it to Confession, God forgives me, and the sin is gone. I, however, would probably forgive myself, but it would take a while; maybe years. My arm, on the other hand, would never grow back, and therefore nature would never forgive me.

By dying on the Cross, Jesus Christ paid the price for all sin, but that payment has yet to be applied to everything. After all, we have free will and therefore can refuse the payment—that is, we can refuse to accept God's love and forgiveness. Right now, we are caught in the time between when Jesus Christ did His part, and mankind is doing its part. In this time, there is suffering, and there will be until all things are brought under the reign of Jesus Christ.

So, my advice to you: bring everything in your life under the reign of Jesus Christ.

**What is the dominate virtue that we should
strive for this Advent to prepare for Christmas?**

Humility is putting others before yourself...but who would want to do that? Once or twice maybe, but always putting others before yourself means you're destined to be living in a van down by the river!!! Not exactly. When someone tells us to put others first, we hear that we need to drop ourselves to the bottom of our priorities. But what if rather than lowering ourselves, we raised everyone up?

Humility isn't thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less. For example, rather than having that last piece of pizza, saving it for your friend who couldn't get to the party early enough. Or asking someone if they'd like a drink when entering your house. In basketball, if your teammate falls, you run over to pick him up. When someone is speaking, you actually listen to them rather than talking over them or playing on your phone. These are all examples of putting others before you without lowering yourself.

Putting other's first isn't exactly rocket science...but there is some science to it. "Feel good" chemicals like dopamine and endorphins are released into your brain when you care for another person. Yeah, God gives us rewards when helping others. God's pretty awesome like that. So the more you help others, the happier you will become. It doesn't mean doing sinful things for others, but simply seeing and caring for others as a child of God.