

Homily by Bishop Felipe J. Estevez
60th Anniversary Mass for Crucifixion Parish, Jacksonville
23 Sunday of Ordinary Time
September 9, 2018

Couples who are in love – in good and solid marriages pay a lot of attention to anniversaries. They celebrate, prepare meals, send cards or notes, and plan the date with care. I have noticed Crucifixion community has done so for their 25th, 50th, and now 60th anniversaries. Memory is very important to present awareness. We recall significant leaders, both lay and clergy. We recall the way we were.

What is most important to this community? It is the Day of the Lord – the Sunday Mass. In each Mass, there are two important tables: Word and Sacrament. In the first, it is about listening. Listening to the Word of God and assenting with our response of faith and conversion as we align to the will of God revealed in our listening.

The second table is related to taste and see how good the Lord is. Come, eat and drink! It is the table of the Eucharistic sacrifice – the offering of the community becomes the prayer of paracletic by the power of the Holy Spirit – the body and blood of the Lord until he comes! It is a presence due to the absence of the Lord Jesus.

In today's Gospel, we see Jesus evangelizing. St. Mark makes a point to show where He is. He is in the region of Decapolis, the territory of the Gentiles. Pope Francis is encouraging us to go to the peripheries. He challenges us to move from our comfort zone and go out, reach out. Jesus is on a mission.

We see the dramatic healing of a deaf man who also has a speech impediment. He pulls him aside and performs a miracle so that he hears again. Now, first of all, he will hear the voice of Jesus Ephedra. We are all in need of listening to the Word of Scriptures. Let us ask to be wide open. I wish I would know what 60 years of listening, and the impact the transformation the Word has had on the community, the life of our families, and neighborhoods. When there is arrogance, there cannot be change. Arrogance is an expression of pride. Is the arrogant aware of his/her arrogance? No. Humility is the antidote, the capacity of listening.

Then there is the healing of the speech impediment, so that the tongue may praise, sing to the Lord's glory. We are very fortunate for the choir. A lot of dedication and preparation and teamwork. When we sing we praise twice, says St. Augustin. At the Mass, we praise the Lord in Jesus, through him and with him. The head is praising with the body. It is Jesus praising with us, we with Jesus (St. Augustin).

The assembly is forming the body of Christ – it is a great privilege to praise the Lord, to communicate with one another, to build up our friendship, to encourage one another. Sunday Mass builds the community of faith.

Today, the diocese turns to one of its community in this network of 55 parishes and missions and celebrates this community with the presence of the bishop. I give thanks for your remarkable

generosity, the capacity for love and sharing. It is stewardship in practice. Share the blessings (i.e., Bishop's Annual Stewardship Appeal, Guardian Schools, and multiple other calls).

Father James R. Boddie, Jr.'s reflections on the Crucifixion Catholic Church 60th Anniversary:

“The history of St. Pius V and Crucifixion Catholic churches are intertwined in their long and proud Catholic history.

As the African American Catholic Community continued to grow rapidly, it became necessary to establish a mission church to address that growing need. That mission church would be called Crucifixion Catholic Church.

As the mission church started to grow, it would soon be elevated to the status of a permanent parish.

I remember when I was a student at Bishop Kenny High School and a member of St. Pius V Parish. I can remember my classmates who were members of Crucifixion Catholic Church, how our families like all the families at St. Pius V and Crucifixion parish were close and always worked together and was always proud of our Catholic faith.

Crucifixion Catholic Church through these years has formed and continue to form outstanding people in the Catholic faith. People who are not only leaders in the faith community of Crucifixion Catholic Church but also leaders in the Diocese of St. Augustine and the City of Jacksonville.

Crucifixion Catholic Church faith community always centered on the Eucharist and the importance of involvement in the Mass every Sunday.

Crucifixion Catholic Church faith community always knew the importance of studying and knowing the Catholic faith and how that Catholic faith have added so much and enriched so much in the African American Catholic Culture.

The early families who were there at the beginning of Crucifixion Catholic Church with the strength of their faith and focus on Jesus Christ and Mary laid that foundation for the families who are presently their at Crucifixion Catholic Church to continue building up the Catholic faith community of Crucifixion Catholic Church.

May this 60th celebration be a time of reflection, challenge, and encouragement in the continued building up of Missionary Disciples to continue the work of the Lord Jesus Christ for many years to come.”

Let us hope for vocations. Prayer is the only thing Jesus asked! Keep praying.