

2026_01_18 Homily

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/011826.cfm>

I wonder if you all are aware that even though we are great community, we do not have enough people involved in Faith Formation programs, in liturgical ministries, and we truly lack outreach ministries. We have wonderful individuals here, but we still need to become an active Christian Community. Our job is to make Christ known as John the Baptist did. But John was not by himself. And some of John's disciples became also Jesus' disciples after seeing Jesus. How you ever wondered what would happen if we set free the massive talents, resources, creativity and energy that each one of us has.... For sure, Catholicism will experience something great here in Greenville. The challenge becomes hard, because some of us do not understand what a Christian vocation is. Even at a basic level of engagement, some of us are not open. When we invite people to serve as Eucharistic Ministers, or in Hospitality, or as lectors, or as singers, the most common response we get is, "I don't have time." Ironically, all these ministries only happen when we have Mass, when you are here anyway.

Maybe some of us believe that faith is just a personal salvation project: "I give some money, a little bit of time by showing up here, and then, the Church owes me sacraments for my children, sick calls when needed, daily and weekend Masses at a time of my convenience, and marriage and burial demands. This is not a Christian vocation. It is actually selfishness and a refusal to give back to the overflowing generosity of a loving and merciful God. Our vocation is something deeper and meaningful: It entails to make everything we can do to live, celebrate and love our faith IN A COMMUNITY, to make Jesus known in the world around us: And the world around us is our families and this community.

The tragic drama of Catholicism is that we do not want God to call us to do something for his church. We just want to come here, and if we are lucky, we can leave before the final blessing. But God calls us individually to respond to the demands of our faith in community, in mission, engaged. Our vocation is to be a community of disciples, engaged in whatever we can, to make Jesus known. Our Baptism is not about personal salvation. It is to a community that Christ came, and for a community that Christ died and was raised. All the Gospels proclaim a truth that many do not

understand yet: God only reveals Himself to real people united together in a body, loving one another, helping one another, showing God to one another.

The only instrument for learning about God is the whole Christian community. All the Gospels were written by Christian Communities inspired by the Holy Spirit in order to let a great and inspiring legacy for Christians of all generations. Too many Catholics are trying to do discipleship alone, so the Church does not have a significant impact on the world. Only a true community can deal with communal problems. Christ needs your ministry. We need your talents to make Jesus known to the person looking for a job, to the child that failed in school, to the couple whose marriage is in tensions, to the person who makes foolish financial choices, to the immigrants who live with fear and anxiety, to the person whose past wounds still hurt. And for sure, in this community we have people who can offer to others acceptance, love and hope, and compassionate listening. And we can do much more, among those who stumble as they walk towards God's Kingdom. Isaiah reminds us that we are to be Light. Christ needs of your ministry. We need your talents to make Jesus known to the person looking for a job, to the child that failed in school, to the couple whose marriage is in tensions, to the person who makes foolish financial choices, to the immigrants who live with fear and anxiety, to the person whose past wounds still hurt. And for sure, in this community we have people who can offer to others, acceptance, love, hope, and compassionate listening. And we can do much more, among those who stumble as they walk towards God's Kingdom.

Isaiah reminds us that we are to be Light to those around us. The call is individual, but the response must be in community. One candle cannot disperse the darkness of a room. Also, One of the beautiful things that happen when people get seriously involved in a ministry, is that they grow in many ways, not only in their faith. No matter how old we are or how much we have achieved, we will always have the chance to grow and mature. And every ministry will offer us opportunities to grow in faith and charity, and to discover more deeply who we really are, and what we are able to give. But ministry is not only about how much we give: People involved in any ministry can tell how much they truly get. We always receive huge amounts of love, God's graces, and deeper understandings of how wonderful we are.

I invite you to pray with the following words: "Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will," May these words inspire many of you, to join us in active ministry.

The Universal Prayer
Sunday 18th January 2026
Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year A

Celebrant:

Sisters and brothers, the witness of John the Baptist to the true nature of Jesus affirms our faith that Jesus is the Chosen One of God.

1. For Pope Leo, that his affirmation that baptism draws each person into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, will strengthen our bond of unity.

We pray to the Lord.

2. For Christians who endure persecution for their faith, that they will be sustained in their relationship with Jesus with great courage.

We pray to the Lord.

3. For the work of the United Nations, celebrating its 80th anniversary of its First General Assembly that it will be dedicated to peace, care for refugees, save children in crisis, respond to natural disasters, and protect the world's cultural, historical and natural heritage.

We pray to the Lord.

4. For all who have lost their homes, livestock and crops in recent bushfires and floods across the world, that the governments and communities will give them support.

We pray to the Lord.

5. For the people of Palestine, Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine, whose lives are caught up in endless cycles poverty, hunger, and violence, that peace will restore dignity and bring safety to all.

We pray to the Lord.

6. For the people of Iran, Venezuela, Cuba and Greenland struggling with political uncertainty, and for immigrants in America, that they will receive justice and live with tranquility.

We pray to the Lord.

7. For all who have died through war, terrorism, hunger, natural disasters and domestic violence, that they will share the light of God's salvation.

We pray to the Lord.

Celebrant:

Heavenly Father, with hearts open to you we sing of new song of praise and pledge that we will always seek to do your will.