

October 13, 2019

From Fr. Jim . . .

Once, I was asked by a young person in our parish what I wanted to be when I was a child. Before I had decided on priesthood, I wanted to be almost everyone: fireman, policeman, teacher, coach, and even a cowboy! I asked her what she wanted to be and without hesitation she said a missionary. She said it very peacefully and calmly as if she really understood what she was saying. I have had parents, also in our parish, ask me to pray for their very young children for God to call them to be missionaries when they become older.

I wonder if it is because their faith and their Christian formation have been greatly influenced by the witness, service and faith of missionaries in their own countries before coming to this one. I wonder if it is because now that they are in this country, their formation is still very much influenced by missionary service and activity. I wonder if it is because by virtue of the Sacrament of Baptism we are all called to be missionaries, to take on the mission that Jesus left for us and to witness to the Gospel in every time and place. I wonder if it is because the New Evangelization asks us to look at broader, "outside of the box" approaches to witnessing to the Gospel and sharing the love of God with all whom we meet. I wonder if it is because we consider ourselves to be missionaries, here, at St. Leo, and because of the diversity of God's people who call St. Leo's home.

Arguably, at the heart of every vocation is the missionary call to serve others with the love of God, to live the Gospel and to go out into the world and proclaim it regardless of the profession, work or specific type of vocation we so choose. This is certainly the witness of every disciple, apostle and follower of Jesus in the Scriptures.

Next weekend, we are celebrating World Missions and we are given the opportunity to support, with our prayers and a second collection, missionaries throughout the world who travel to other countries to build the kingdom of God. They need both our financial generosity and prayers and let us keep praying that all of us and all people will desire to be missionaries in every time and place. May God bless and prosper our loving service and witness in his name.

Blessing of Missionaries Sent To Proclaim the Gospel (NCCB, The Liturgical Press, 1989, pp. 153-154):

We bless you, O God, and we praise your name. In your merciful providence you sent your Son into the world to free us from the bondage of sin by his own blood and to enrich us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Before he returned, triumphant over death, to you, Father, he sent his apostles, the bearers of his love and power, to proclaim the Gospel of life to all peoples and in the waters of baptism to cleanse those who believe. Lord, look kindly on your servants: we send them forth as messengers of salvation and peace, marked with the sign of the cross. Guide their steps with your mighty arm and with the power of your grace strengthen them in spirit, so that they will not falter through weariness. Make their words the echo of Christ's voice, so that those who hear them may be drawn to obey the Gospel. Fill the hearts of your missionaries with the Holy Spirit, so that becoming all things to all people, they may lead many to you, the Father of all, to sing your praises in your holy Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

