

From the Desk of Fr. Jerry

Dear Friends,

When Cardinal Cupich returned from the Synod last October people asked, “How was it? He told them, “I made a lot of new friends and no new enemies.” Recently he wrote about this in a message to priests. The Cardinal advised, “Make friends the way Jesus makes friends.”

Jesus extended friendship in a way that transcended boundaries. By going into Gentile and Samaritan territory, He revealed God as having no boundaries when it comes to making friends. Jesus befriended by eating with sinners and visiting their homes. To his disciples Jesus said, “I no longer call you servants, but friends.”

The Cardinal suggested that priests recalibrate how we make friends. “Make friends the way Jesus makes friends.” He urged us to:

“...ask ourselves if we have set boundaries on whom we befriend and if doing so has limited our ability to listen to each other. This is the kind of listening that pays attention to the spiritual movements in oneself and in the other person during conversations, by respecting and welcoming others as they are. It is a recognition that the Spirit of God works in everyone, yes, even those who disagree with us.

This is how Jesus interacts with his friends. He walked along his disciples on the road to Emmaus, and he inquired “what are you talking about.” He asks them to share their anger and their fear. And he is willing to go where they are going, not controlling the conversation or the direction of the journey, but he accepts their hospitality.

The Cardinal’s advice to priests is particularly timely during my transition into leadership at St. Patrick. I hope to be making many new friends, and hopefully, no new enemies while I am here. That process has already begun as many have taken the time to welcome me and introduce themselves. I deeply appreciate the warm welcome and pray that I will be able to be as welcoming when we disagree or when our ideas about church differ.

It is also a timely message for the parish. As a parish we have the opportunity to make new friends. When we welcome the stranger, recognize others needs, reach across boundaries, we open a path toward deeper friendship with one another and with God.

Friends can be vulnerable, express needs, and find complementarity. All of these are signs that God’s Spirit is among us.

Sincerely,



Fr. Jerry Gunderson