



16th Ordinary Sunday B

The Mission of Jesus was to preach, to heal and to cast out demons. In the gospel of today, we see Jesus in the midst of his mission. Listening to his amazing words and seeing the healing he performed on the sick, a lot of people stayed with Jesus for many days, and they ran out of food and were hungry. So Jesus performed another miracle and fed five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish. Today we have the responsibility to continue the mission of Jesus. What is our Mission? One of the important priorities for our parish that I set forth in my Vision 2025 is evangelization. As a Church community we exist to evangelize. Our primary mission is to make disciples for Christ. That was the final wish and command that Jesus left with his disciples before he ascended into heaven: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Mt. 28:19)

Why to Evangelize?

“For the disciple of Christ to evangelize is an obligation of love” (*St. John Paul II*). We need to become more and more an evangelizing community here in Bend. There are so many in town who do not know of Christ. There are many Catholics and non-Catholics who do not go to church. We have a mission to reach out to them while deepening our own faith. Ever since the pandemic started, a small group of us led by Dcn. Steve met to pray and to discern a path to become a strong evangelizing community. We have been evaluating various evangelization tools that are available

to us. This small group has met numerous times. The tool that we would like to use in our parish to advance in our Mission to evangelize is Alpha.

Alpha is the basic message of Jesus Christ. It is a series of sessions exploring the Christian faith. Each talk looks at a different question around faith and is designed to create conversation. Alpha is being run all around the globe, and everyone is welcome. The three key things in Alpha are: food, a talk, and good conversation.

Alpha is for everyone, but primarily for those who have little or no familiarity with Jesus. We need you to reach out to them and accompany them. Many of us have been “sacramentalized,” but we have not been evangelized. Many Catholics today are interested only in checking off the list of sacraments they received themselves and for their children without being truly evangelized or having had a personal encounter with Christ. Alpha is the perfect opportunity for that encounter with Christ.

Alpha helps the parish to become an evangelizing community. Alpha helps the parish to foster a personal encounter and relationship with Jesus through the power and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Alpha engages lay people in the life and mission of the Church.

We hope to introduce Alpha at St. Francis this September, and we need your help. Please begin to pray for the success of this event and do the following:

1. Write down the names of at least three people you would like to see explore faith—three persons you would like to invite to Alpha. Write down their names on a slip of paper, bring it to church next week, and drop it off in the basket in front of the altar.
2. Set a daily alarm at 3 p.m. as a reminder to pray for those three persons.
3. Be open to how God might use you. When we spend time with the Living God, we see Him do extraordinary things.

Let us become an evangelizing community.