

# 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time—Year C

I HAVE COME  
TO BRING

*Fire* TO THE EARTH  
LUKE 12:49

**C**OVID is still with us and maybe it will be with us forever. This should not prevent us from living our faith. There are now vaccines and effective treatments for this disease. What more can we expect? There are several parishioners (about 30%) who have not returned to church. If you can be in a store, a restaurant, a party or be in flight where you are shoulder to shoulder, there is no reason not to be in the church. In the church you do not have to sit shoulder to shoulder. Our new church that holds 800 people has not been more than 60% full since the pandemic. While we appreciate your presence online, we would really love your physical presence with us if you are not sick or limited by some serious underlying conditions. It is within a community of believers we worship and grow. We need everyone to be fully engaged into our parish life and activities. To facilitate that we have today a special celebration: *Come, Celebrate, Connect*. It is an invitation to *Come* to see what St. Francis has to offer you to learn, grow and serve. It is an invitation to *Celebrate* who we are as Catholics and to celebrate the Eucharist to give thanks to God for all his blessings. It is an invitation to *Connect* with fellow parishioners and with the life and activities of the parish. It is an invitation to be the good stewards God has called you to be.

Our mission is to evangelize and carrying out this mission takes time, talents, and financial commitments. Time is to be understood as a commitment to spiritual growth and discipleship. Talent is entirely about serving others. Treasure is about financial giving. There are two types of involved parishioners. The first is those who constantly serve. They are involved in many ministries and would never say “no” to anything. They do not take time to receive anything. They are always giving. But they experience burnout. The second category of parishioners are those who always receive. They never give or serve. Both are deadly. But the second is the deadliest. The Dead Sea is truly dead because it has only tributaries and no distributaries. It only receives salt water that evaporates and results in the lethal levels of salt that banishes all life. Therefore it is important to find a balance between serving others and our own need to connect and grow. As Catholic stewards of God’s time, it is important that we learn to set priorities, make choices and spend time doing the work that God truly wants us to do for Him.

God has given us time. He has blessed each of us with 1,440 minutes every day and 10,080 minutes in every week. How many of those minutes do you use to grow? Studies show that most of our time goes to sleeping, working and watching television. An average person in America spends 10% of his time watching television and only 1% in spiritual activities like prayer, worship and volunteer activities at the church. Can you commit a little more time to spiritual growth?

If we are to build God’s kingdom, we need to share your God given talents. We have different and unique gifts given to us by God. When we bring these gifts together in our parish we can build God’s kingdom here on earth. Your gifts are unique and no one else has them. Can you share more of your talents to build up the Church? The celebration this weekend will provide you the opportunity to get involved in the life and activities of the parish and share your time and talents. All the ministries in the parish will be on display under the titles learn, grow and serve. It takes many volunteers sharing their time to run the Church.

When you share your time and talent to do God’s work in the parish, you are contributing your share to build God’s kingdom. As **St. Teresa of Avila said:**

***Christ has no body now on earth, but yours;  
no hands but yours; no feet but yours.  
Yours are the eyes through which He is  
to go about doing good;  
yours are the hands with which He is  
to bless people now.***

Therefore, by committing more of your time to learn and grow and by sharing your talents, you can truly be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ here in our parish. I greatly appreciate those of you who already share your time and talent with the Church. To others, I pray that our celebration this weekend be a time of reflection and resolution. Stay after the Masses this weekend to connect with others, enjoy some food, and celebrate the life and activities of our parish. Jesus in the gospel of today said, “I have come to set the earth on fire.” It is the fire of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit set our hearts on fire that we share our time and talents to build God’s kingdom and serve God’s Church.