

12th SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME – C (June 20, 2010)
Deacon John Baker

By now, I am sure that you are getting used to my homilies. I don't know if you remember the message of any of those homilies but I am sure you remember that I almost always violate the first rule for a homily.

Tell them what you are going to tell them.
Tell them.
Tell them what you just told them.

The second rule is to then shut up and sit down.

It seems to me that I almost always have two or three or even four topics that I just have to include in a homily.

I guess I am hoping that at least one of those topics will mean something to everyone.

This homily is no different so I offer my apology now and get on with it.

First Topic: Father's Day

As a father and a grandfather myself, I extend both a thank you for all that you fathers do for your family and a challenge to bring your family closer to Christ by the example of how you live your faith.

Realize that our parenting successes come in part from the gifts that God has given us.

But, failures and difficult situations in our families are also part of being a father.

I think men often look at these as negative things in our family life or our ability to parent.

This is the time to turn to Christ for support and a teaching opportunity for the family that we are never alone in dealing with life.

Second Topic: The Year for Priests.

Today mark's the closing day of "The Year for Priests."

The Vatican didn't choose this day because of the United States celebration of Father's Day.
It is just a coincidence.

I invite you to help yourself to the prayer for priests located under the front cover of the missalettes.
Take the prayer home and continue to pray often for Fr. Kopacek and all pastors who serve a parish.

We have all been blessed to share nine years of Father Jerry Kopacek's life as our spiritual father ///
And a very good father he has been to all of us ///
Many of you have been personally touched by his presence in difficult times as well as celebration.

I speak for all of us deacons
when I tell you how grateful we are
for his support of our ministries
and to us as deacons ///

Third Topic: Our Sister Parishes in Grison-Garde, Haiti and Okolona, Mississippi.

A really huge thanks to all who have so generously assisted our sister parishes thru the annual June collection.

Our parish in Haiti continues to struggle with economic developments to provide work for parishioners and additional sources of healthy processed food products.

It is sort of two steps forward and one back at times.

The Adopt a Student program has been very successful assisting in tuition aid for students, salaries for teachers and school supplies.

The earthquake that devastated the capital of Haiti did not impact Grison-Garde.

But the immigration of people from the earthquake stricken area to Grison-Garde has created additional needs for what is already a very poor population.

OKOLONA

The needs of our sister parishes change from year to year but always there is the challenge of more needs than there is help. Your prayers and generosity for the annual collection is another thing that also never changes from year to year.

God bless you.

And finally; the Fourth Topic: an actual homily on today's Gospel reading.

The closing words of today's Gospel are words by which I attempt to live my life.

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For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."

Succeeding in a chosen career may require us to earn a college degree and then put in many years of effort before reaching our career goal.

As a father, don't many of us men believe that it is our actions that make us a successful father? And I think that the same goes for moms too.

It is easy to transfer the way the world measures success to our understanding of how to live our faith.

Our natural inclination leads us to expect that we are personally responsible for the actions required to save our self and win a place in Heaven.

Luke 9:24 creates a paradox.

Jesus says: Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it.

The meaning is clear.

If we wish to achieve a life with God in Heaven, only thru our own actions, we will fail.

Jesus then completes verse 24 with the answer on how to secure our place in Heaven.

Jesus says: whoever wishes to save his life will lose it.

The meaning of these words is also clear.

If we wish to achieve a life with God in Heaven, we must do it Jesus' way.

Not by dieing physically on a cross but dieing to the belief that we can succeed only by our actions and beliefs.

Only by self-denial and surrender to Jesus will we save our lives in any lasting, eternal sense.

The members of Alcoholics Anonymous who are in recovery from addiction, live by the credo: "Let go and Let God." They accept the failure of doing it their way and embrace a God who loved them even when they were down and out.

Do we look only to ourselves to solve the problems in our lives created by illness, death, relationships and so many of the struggles in our modern lives?

Isn't God a lot better prepared to handle all those problems?

We too will lay down our life and follow Jesus, or we will seek to have Jesus as only part of our lives and risk losing our very selves.

Discipleship is not a more difficult path for a Christian. It is the only path to life. We either follow Jesus' path, or we lose our way.

Which path are you on?

