

Dear Fellow Saint Augustine of Canterbury Parishioners,

On several occasions over the past year and a half you have heard Fr. Von Deeke mention the Into My Vineyard program during Mass. During this time, your Into My Vineyard group has been learning what parishioners across our Diocese can do to prepare our parish families to grow, thrive, and ultimately learn how to take over many duties in our parishes that currently fall on the shoulders of our parish priests.

I believe we can all agree, a parish is not strong solely because of its priests. In fact, just the opposite is true. A parish will only grow and be vibrant if its parishioners are willing to get involved. If parishes rely too heavily on their priests to take charge of all aspects of parish life, then that parish is destined to slowly wither away and only barely survive rather than thrive. One person cannot do it all. The Catholic Church does not solely exist in the bricks and stones that make up our buildings in which we worship. No, The Catholic Church, the Church which Jesus Christ Our Lord and Savior passed on, is made up of you and me to literally spread the Great News we hear in the Gospels. It is absolutely up to us, the parishioners, to take charge of how this parish of ours grows and thrives. It is up to us to determine how this parish is seen by non-members, its visitors, and its parish members that, for one reason or another, have stopped attending and worshipping with our family.

If you have ever thought to yourself or expressed out loud, “The Catholic Church has to do something; we keep losing members,” then we are asking you to join us to DO SOMETHING.

God has blessed each one of us with unique talents and gifts and we are called by God to use these gifts in many ways. We are called to use them to raise our families and we are called to grow His Church. This responsibility does not rest solely on our clergy. We are called by Jesus to take what we hear in the Gospels on Sundays and, not simply leave it in the pews when we leave, but rather take His Word with us and apply it to our own lives and bring His Good News to those we encounter. This could be as simple as a smile to a passing stranger.

For this reason, in the coming weeks you will be called to consider how you can lend your gifts to our parish in a way you feel God is calling you. I ask that between now and sometime shortly after the first of the year you earnestly and openly pray and ask God where he wants you to use your talents.

At that time, in January, you will be given a survey to complete and return. This survey will allow you to mark off what you have an interest in and where you feel you can apply your strongest attributes. Are you a handy person? Are you musically gifted with a nice voice? Can you play a musical instrument? Can you cook? Are you good at organizing large groups of people? Do you enjoy fellowship with your peers? Can you speak easily to others? Can you manage money? Are you good with the written word? Whatever your gifts and your talents, please bring them to the table. Help us build Christ’s Church here in Hecker.

If you have any questions between now and the time the survey comes out please feel free to reach out to me at 618-960-5839.

On behalf of my fellow Into My Vineyard participants; Cheri Mudd, Brian Smith and Debbie Harbaugh, please lend us a hand. God Bless!

Sincerely,

Clinton Mudd