

## A NOTE FROM FATHER EICKHOFF

"You are witnesses of these things."

These are the final words in today's Gospel passage and nearly the final words spoken by Christ in the entire Gospel of Luke. Jesus Christ is directly speaking to the disciples as He speaks these words. He is charging the disciples to go out into the world and tell other people what they have seen and heard in the presence of Jesus for what they have witnessed cannot and should not be held back from other people. Their time with the Lord has not been some private, secret revelation that is meant for them alone. No. Christ's actions, His words, His sacrifice has been done for many. And the many people need to know of it. It is now the mission of the disciples to let people know what God has done for them.

Now this is not just a mission whose time has come and gone with the first disciples of Jesus Christ. Everyone who has heard and believed the words of the Gospel has become a witness to Jesus. That includes us today. Now that does not mean that every parishioner reading these lines should immediately make themselves a big sign with the words "repent now!" in giant letters and carry it through the streets. That would likely be ineffective in convincing anyone to repent of their evil ways and turn to Jesus. Indeed, notice how St. Paul witnesses to Jesus Christ in the scriptures. He doesn't wander through the city streets shouting out about Jesus. Instead, he has a plan and a method when he visits a new place. In his own words he describes how he first speaks in the synagogues and other places where believers in God gather in order to witness to them about Jesus Christ. We ourselves can learn from St. Paul and seek to have a plan as to how to witness to Christ in the way that best suits our own abilities and talents.

What that plan will look like will vary from person to person. The religious brother or sister who lives in a cloistered monastery – who rarely interacts with outsiders – yet prays regularly on behalf of the world and its people is a witness to Christ. And the man or woman who is too ill to leave the house or lives in a nursing home yet daily prays for the world and its people is a witness to Christ. The modern missionary working in a distant land among people who do not know Jesus is surely a witness to Christ. And so is the man or woman living here who simply and openly practices their Christian faith among people who have forgotten or ignore Christ. We can be witnesses to Christ no matter where we are or who we are. Seek out the way to be a witness to Christ in the way that will be suitable for you and will most likely lead others to Jesus; and you will be fulfilling the Lord's mission that He has given you.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Stephen Eickhoff  
Pastor