

LOOKING THROUGH STAINED GLASS

A Column by Fr. Tom

A Catholic Community that Grows Disciples

Last week, we discussed being one Parish Family and a sign of that family – our Parish Crest or logo. Our family, like any family, has a past, present and future. We build on our past and look forward to our future, in order that we might live as God intends for us today. How does God intend for us to live today? As disciples of Christ!

In order that we might always remember that we have been called to be Christ's disciples, we now have a vision statement that expresses our present reality and our future goal. Our parish family is "A Catholic Community that Grows Disciples". You may ask yourself, "What does that mean?" Well, let's explore this idea a little bit.

First, this vision statement calls us who are members of the parish to grow in discipleship today. The word disciple comes from the Latin root, *discere*, which means "to learn." So Jesus is calling us to learn from Him. If we call ourselves Christians, then we need to learn how to be like Christ. We can learn from what He taught us, such as "Love God with your whole heart, soul, mind and strength" and "Love one another as I have loved you." Also, we can learn what it means to love like He does, by emulating the love He showed us in His life and ministry. We can, as He did, tend to one another's needs, forgive one another, and give ourselves in service to one another – first, in our parish community, and then also in the surrounding area.

If we are "A Catholic Community the Grows Disciples," it also means that we are called to grow as a community. We are called to bring new disciples of Christ into our community. After all, that is part of the Great Commission that Jesus gave us in his final words before His Ascension: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." [MT 28:19-20]

It is for these two reasons – (1) Christ calls us to grow *as* disciples and (2) Christ calls us to grow our community *of* disciples – that our vision statement is not only a statement about who we are, but also a statement about our goals for the future.

In the near future, we will have more columns on what it means for us to be disciples, to add disciples to our community, and how we might live our vision as "A Catholic Community that Grows Disciples."

