



Sacred Heart Catholic Church

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Vision Sunday #4

Happy Gaudete Sunday! Rejoice! The coming of the Lord is close at hand! We are privileged and grateful to continue introducing and expanding our parish's new vision statement:

Inviting Everyone to Passionately Live the Gospel

Building upon the foundational premise that the gospel message of Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection is what makes it possible for us to be restored in relationship with God Himself, last month we discussed what it means to Live the Gospel – namely, that our lives as Catholics be centered around the adventure of self-sacrificial love within the course of our daily lives. This love requires real sacrifice, just as Christ's love for us led Him to His passion and death (symbolized in our vision materials by the crown of thorns). However, each of us finds within our own experience that the more we give in this sacrificial way mysteriously the more we receive. This is one of the great paradoxes of Christianity that indicates to us that willing the good of another (St. Thomas Aquinas' definition of love) is written into our very nature as human beings. Simply put, we are made to be loved and to love.

This weekend we will expand our focus of the new vision statement one word further – Passionately Live the Gospel. The parish council specifically chose to include the word 'passionately' in response to one of the biggest challenges to faithful missionary discipleship in the Midwest. In this part of the country there are much fewer atheists as much as there are apatheists. Apatheism is not the rejection of God, but it is also not the acceptance of God. Apathy means that we place God into a category of irrelevance, we simply just don't care.

Fr. Mark asks the question fairly often in his homilies: What are you passionate about? What engages you or gets you out of bed in the morning? This may be a question that you can answer readily, or perhaps you've never stopped to ask the question of yourself before. Here's the point: Whatever it is that 'fires you up' can be oriented to the glory of God and love of those He has placed in your life. *Our Lord called man's heart the source from which the passions spring* (CCC 1764). What you are passionate about is an indication of where your heart is and God is most interested in your heart!

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The vision statement is not about getting more people to do more 'church-ey' things in the Church or getting people to sign up for the many different activities that go on around here, even if these groups do many good things. It has everything to do with inviting us to consider what we are truly passionate about (even if it's not a checkable box on the stewardship form) **and how we can orient that passion toward the glory of God and love of neighbor for the building up of the body of Christ.** Can you imagine if every person in Sacred Heart was passionately living their lives for others, passionately living the gospel? In a town of 26,000 we would easily transform the culture around us and become a beacon of God's radiant light to the world.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!
Mary, star of the New Evangelization, pray for us!

- Thomas Eskro
Director of Evangelization
and Discipleship



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