

Easter 7 Year A

Talking To The Youth

Today I want to talk to the kids, but the rest of you are welcome to listen in. There is a common saying that the youth of today are the church of tomorrow. I believe that is wrong. What I do believe is that youth are just as important as any other group in the church right now, and in my experience, if you want to see a church take off, then make the young people a powerful force and church will come alive.

We call today Youth Sunday because today our Sunday School and Youth programs end for the summer. So I want to take this opportunity to say a few things to our young people which I think are important.

First, I pray that you have faith. We live in a very fast paced and competitive society. We receive so much information and misinformation in the course of a day it is hard to evaluate how much of it is good or not so good. We all need a measuring stick, and the Christian faith is the measuring stick that has gotten me through life.

We believe in one God, in his son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. We believe that God loves us unconditionally; our goal as human beings is to love God and love one another.

That is our faith and anything or anyone who suggests that we should not love and be loved is not someone we want to listen to. So I say to you the words my own father always said to me: Keep the faith.

Second, I pray that you have commitment. I think that one way in which growing up today is different than when I grew up is that young people now are pulled in so many directions and each force pulling on you wants your full commitment.

In time we all learn that we can't be committed to all these things simultaneously, and we'll have to make decisions about what is really important, and what I want to tell you is that placing the Christian life first is what helps the other things fall into place.

For example, I love the Phillies and I have been a baseball fan all my life. But all of you are much more important than the fact that the Phils can't score any runs! You are my faith community, which will sustain me through all life's ups and downs. Our faith community is more important than our hobbies.

Jesus said seek ye first the Kingdom of God, than all these other things will be given to you as well. So, I want to say to you: Among your many commitments, place first among them your commitment to Christ.

Third, I pray that you will pray. That may sound odd, but Christianity is not a set of rules or ethical principles. Christianity is essentially about having a relationship with God through Jesus Christ and we build any relationship with someone by spending time with them, and people of faith spend time with God by setting aside time every day for prayer.

As I have said many times, it can be as simple as saying the Lord's Prayer, giving thanks for the blessings of the day, and praying for anyone we know in need. I find that if I am not saying my prayers than it becomes all too easy to fall pray to cynicism or excessive "busy-ness." I lose my bearings.

So, I pray, and I pray that you will pray.

I want to thank all our young people who have participated in our Sunday School and Youth ministries this year, and all the teachers who have led these ministries.

Keep the faith, be committed, and pray every day. These three things will help you blossom into the magnificent person God created you to be.
Amen.