

## The Light of the World

In the past several weeks, I have had the opportunity to see the best of our diocese at work. Last week I was at the bishops dinner where close to 1000 people attended, hundreds of thousands of dollars were raised, and students received funding for special programs.

Last month I attended one rock 2.0 where 700 young adults (mostly from Calgary) were present, where speakers catechized and challenged students to be better Catholics and the feeling of excitement that filled the building at the end of the day was contagious.

These are great examples of how the body of Christ was functioning not just in a spiritual or abstract level, but on a real, incarnational level in our diocese, where, **as St. Paul says, the body of Christ is working to build “the unity of faith” and growing to “the full stature of Christ.”**

In these examples I thought about all the different gifts that were needed to make the event successful: administration, fund raising, volunteers, production, speakers, FOOD! When the Church, the body of Christ, is working well, something beautiful is accomplished: grace is unleashed and people are inspired and transformed.

Unfortunately, in most parishes or congregations, guess what percentage of the parish is actively engaged (i.e. spiritually, emotionally, financially committed to their Churches, invite others, their lives are better because of their community, they feel like they belong)? According to a Gallup research study in the US: 16%! About 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the congregation! The other half are not engaged and about a third are actively disengaged.

Fortunately, at St. Peter's I would say that the level of engagement is higher. I would say that we are around 20-24%. With all the people involved with the knights, the CWL, SVDP, the choirs, pastoral care, sacristans/Eucharistic ministers...So to echo Fr Jonathan, I am very appreciative of the work that St. Peter's has done.

However, St. Paul and Jesus are challenging us today. How can we mobilize the entire body of Christ? How can we grow to the full stature of Christ? St. Paul did not say: Brothers and sisters, grace was given to 16% of us. No! He said grace was

given to EACH of us. EACH of us who are here, and EACH of us who are not here. Although at St. Peter's we can be proud that we have a higher engagement rate than the average, we should not be satisfied. It would be like saying, "Hey guys! My body is functioning at 25%!"

I believe we can take St. Peter's to another level. See, when one part of the body is hurting, the whole body is hurting—even when it is the smallest body part e.g. stubbed toe. Although we are doing great work here at St. Peter's, imagine all the gifts that we are missing out on! This is what we can do with 500 engaged members; imagine what we could do with 1000, 1500, 2500 engaged members! We would be a force that could not be contained in the NW and we would be that city on the hill giving light to the whole city of Calgary.

Brothers and sisters, our Lord is challenging us to use our gifts to build up the body of Christ because at the end of our lives, he WILL ask us like he asked the gardener of the fig tree, "What fruit have you borne from the life I have given you?"

To those of you who are already involved and engaged: I challenge you to invite others, to recognize the gifts of others and empower them to become involved or become leaders in your ministry. People are more engaged if they are participating in something they are good and contribute to the good of the Church.

To those of you who are maybe thinking of being engaged in the parish life but haven't fully immersed themselves yet or you are part of the parish but you feel you could offer so much more: the body of Christ needs you! The myriad of gifts out there are waiting to be unlocked and unleashed for the glory of God! There is still so much we could do at St. Peter's: a youth group for kids, reaching out to the 4000 families that are registered...so many souls to save and your gifts could assist in this glorious mission.

So, will you take on the challenge to build up the body of Christ? Will you join me in magnifying this light which comes from our Lord all over this city, or will you hide your light under a bushel basket?