

Someone or something is always going to be competing for our time, energy and attention, so we have to stay focused. So the question is: What are we going to choose to stay focused on?

Just what exactly are we willing to expend our time, energy and attention on?

Jesus would like us to stay focused on the same thing he asked of the 72 in today's Gospel: announcing the Kingdom of God is at hand!

The Second Vatican Council's "Constitution on the Church" puts it this way:

"Following the desire and command of Christ, the Church makes a serious effort to present the Gospel to the whole world – so that all people can share in God's love. **EVERYONE WHO IS BAPTIZED** is charged with this mission." [Paragraph 17]

But I know – we're all so very, very busy. How can we possibly just drop everything we do, "carrying no money bag, no sack, no sandals" and go off to tell others of the kingdom of God?

But maybe we're wrong in assuming that is what is being asked of us, rather than just seeing it as a request to carry the values of the Kingdom of God to the places we already go and in that way achieve the mission entrusted to us.

Let's not just identify evangelization with something we do above and beyond what we are already doing – without also considering it as something we can do – just by being the people God is calling us to be.

Most all of us here are Christian. And we are here to be re-charged and re-energized by the Word of God and the reception of Christ's Body and Blood.

And while we are here, we are also to reconnect with the values God calls us to have as disciples of Jesus. Those who are:

- Honest,
- Hardworking,
- Generous,
- Joyful,
- Compassionate,
- Humble,
- Disciplined,
- Prayerful,
- And generally in love with life.

And it is armed with these values that we leave this place – and **can** proclaim the kingdom of God wherever we go.

Again, the Constitution on the Church states, “Thus the vocation of each layperson is to seek the reign of God in his or her everyday work and to direct that work according to God.

Laypeople live in ordinary circumstances of family and social life, which is where they are called by God.

- By their lifestyles,
- Their work,
- Their prayer,
- Their family life,
- Their leisure and entertainment,
- And their hardships, too.

Laypeople give witness to the Light of Christ. The laity go forth as powerful proclaimers of a faith in things hoped for.” [Par. 33-35]

My brothers and sisters, **WE ARE CALLED TO TOUCH THE PLACES WE GO WITH THE VALUES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD!!**

And oh, the places we go. . .

I asked the staff to keep a “travel diary” of all the places they went to in one week’s time— and of course they all wondered what I was up to — since I never told them how I was going to use the information.

Six of us accepted the assignment and it showed that most of us lead very active lives, going to almost 25 different places in a given week. And we were in FOUR different states!

Merely six staff members went to 147 different places in a week's time!

147 places where we carried our Christian values with us – and *had the opportunity* to proclaim the kingdom of God by our presence.

Do the math – if there are 300 of us in this place right now – and each of us went to 25 places in a given week, it means we have the potential to impact as many as 7,500 places in the coming week alone, a pretty expansive impact accomplished not by dropping everything we do to go and proclaim the kingdom, but just by taking the kingdom to the places that we already go.

Now ask yourself– Do we have the potential to make a difference in the world or not?

But what difference can we make in these places we go?

One staff member told me they really dislike going to Wal-Mart (although they went five times in one week) --- because nobody ever seems to be happy at Wal-Mart.

So I said – what if you are committed as a Christian to being *the one happy person* in that place? What if you smiled – when everyone else was grumpy? What if you chose to be polite when everyone else was being rude?

What if you were the one who held a door open – took the cart back – or let someone cut in front of you without getting angry?? Would it make a difference????

And not just at Wal-Mart – but O'Reilly's and K-Mart, at Arby's and JR's, at the library, the post office, the physical therapist's, the gas station, and at Little League ballgames.

We do have the potential to impact at least 7,500 places this coming week alone. Add to that those at two more Masses – and it becomes 22,500 places! Let's not underestimate the difference we can make:

The values we carry with us can affect the quality of someone else's day. What it comes down to is this:

We might be somebody else's only contact with Christ-like-ness. We cannot take that for granted.

But it can only happen if we stay focused on the Kingdom of God.