

16<sup>th</sup> Sunday per Annum - C  
Genesis 18:1-10a;  
Colossians 1:24-28;  
Luke 10:38-42  
Little Flower - 7/17/16

My Brothers and Sisters,

As much as I looked forward to vacation, as much as I enjoyed vacation, I was equally happy to come home. When I am away, I miss you.

If there is a key theme in today's readings, it is hospitality. In Genesis, Abraham and Sarah offered hospitality to the three men who appeared at their tent. In the Gospel, Martha and Mary, friends of Jesus, welcomed Jesus into their home. We read in Hebrews: "*Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels*" [13:2]. People often say that Little Flower is a very welcoming parish. Of course, our biggest opportunity to show hospitality and to be welcoming is at Sunday Liturgy.

However, Jesus calls us to do more than welcome people and show hospitality. Matthew's Gospel ends with the Great Commission: "*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...*" [28:19]. Since Pope Paul VI, every Pope has emphasized evangelization and/or re-evangelization. Pope John Paul II defined evangelization as the Church's effort to proclaim to everyone that God loves us, that he has given himself for us in Christ Jesus, and that he invites us to an unending life of happiness.

As a parish, we probably evangelize or re-evangelize more than we realize. As I mentioned, we are a welcoming parish. Every year we generously support missionaries who request our prayers and financial support. We offer the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Many come because you invited or encouraged them to come. Some come because you asked us to invite them. Some come because of your example and witness. Some find their way here on their own. Finally, Little Flower School has a significant number of non-Catholic students.

However, as a parish, we can and should do more, especially in the area of re-evangelization. Therefore, today I would like to introduce you to *INVITE*, our new evangelization committee. Its mission is very simple: "The Little Flower Evangelization Committee, *INVITE*, will encourage and equip Little Flower parishioners to invite the unchurched, reconnect former Catholics, and share the Good News by personally responding to Jesus' invitation to 'Follow Me.'"

In Bishop Robert Barron's "Catholicism: The New Evangelization" series, George Weigel suggests: 1) every Catholic parish needs to have as its primary purpose spreading the Gospel of God's mercy and love throughout the world; 2) every Catholic should be rediscovering or learning for the first time that he or she has been baptized into a missionary vocation; 3) every Catholic parish should be letting its people know that when they are leaving the parking lot they are entering mission territory; and 4) every Catholic parish should remind parishioners that faith increases as faith is given away.

My brothers and sisters, we can be a more welcoming parish, but many of us are intimidated even at the thought of inviting others to Mass, much less discussing the Gospel or our faith. The *Invite* group will be providing tools and events that will make it easy, and we hope that you will be watching for these opportunities and will participate. Our first event will be the first annual Invite-Your-Neighbors Cookout on Thursday, August 4. Please check out the flyer in today's bulletin, mark your calendars, and invite your neighbors.