

## 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The American Guild of Organists held its annual convention in Kansas City this month; the cathedral hosted parts of it. Last week I participated in the annual convention of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians in Baltimore. Conventions educate and celebrate, but they also often include an appeal for more members. When like-minded people gather, they enjoy one another's company. That joy effortlessly fuels membership drives. We're happy to be with people who share our loves, and we're happier when more such people show up. The same desire surfaces with people who love a particular product or social platform. The more committed they are, the more they'll try to recruit you.

This drive surfaces in today's gospel. Jesus summons the Twelve, gives them the tools they need, and sends them out to work wonders and proclaim the gospel. He knows that some who hear won't follow, but he still makes the Twelve tell the good news. In the first reading Amos begins his ministry under a similar command, "Go, prophesy to my people Israel," and even today's responsorial psalm opens with this theme: "Let us hear what our God proclaims." God speaks to us. We listen. We reshape our lives. Then we recruit others with the same message. Sometimes we let things get in the way - we fear rejection; we doubt our abilities; we turn to other less-challenging interests. We don't always live the gospel as much as we could.

Here at the cathedral as we end one fiscal year and start up another, I want to thank all of you for living the gospel through your financial help to us. As with other churches, we rely on your support, and we rejoice in the shared faith that inspires your gift. We ended last fiscal year a little behind, which has been a problem in the past as well. We're still servicing a quarter million dollar longterm debt over the renovation of the building. We have paid some of it down this year, but we're slipping in our abilities to pay off short-term debt, our monthly bills. As a parish the cathedral has just over 500 regular donors. When we compare the first 6 months of this year to the first 6 months of last, two thirds of our regular donors have increased their giving. Thank you all. However the dollar amount of that increase does not make up for the decrease that happened with the other third of our members. Regarding contributions from visitors, these declined about 25% during the same period. Surely this is partly due to reducing the weekend schedule from six masses to four. Some of those who preferred a particular time for mass are probably going elsewhere. That hurts us, but it will benefit other Catholic parishes in the region who surely need financial help as well. Often the 8 pm Sunday mass here is the best attended service of our weekend, but it almost always represents the smallest collection.

When I read Jesus' command to the Twelve to go out on mission without food, sack or money in their belts, I realize we have to be prepared to make do with less. Sometimes the gospel is more effective that way. But I also believe that you want to support the cathedral's mission in the ways that you live out the gospel in prayer, service and charity.

Each of us belongs to different guilds, associations and families. They all deserve our support. And they should inspire us to listen for God's word, reshape our lives, and recruit others by telling them and showing them what we believe.

Sunday, July 15, 2018