

(Have families stand by years with parish since 1964.)

Thank you. It's great to see so many families represented.

Today's Gospel covers many topics, but one theme recurs three times. That theme is family--Jesus' family to be exact. You'd expect that the perfect child would come from the perfect family, but what the Gospel says isn't pretty.

In the opening scene Jesus goes home for dinner, but so many people crowd in that there's no room to eat. Jesus' family observes all this, and what do they say? Does his mother say, "That's my boy!" Do his relatives say, "I taught him everything he knows." No, they grab at Jesus and say, "He's out of his mind."

Then the scribes enter the scene. They saw Jesus cast out devils, and they think he got this power from the devil himself. Jesus asks, "Why would the devil want to cast out the devil?" And then he talks about family. He says if a household is divided it won't survive. And you get the feeling he's referring to his own family, who think he's out of his mind.

Then, finally, the crowd notices that his family is here, and they pass the word up to him. But Jesus practically rejects them, saying, "Those people aren't my family. You're my family. Anyone who does the will of God is family to me."

My brothers and sisters, if you've ever wondered why your family can't be like Jesus' family, I've got news for you. It probably is.

What's important here is that in spite of the problems with his nuclear family, Jesus claims membership with a larger family. If we do the will of God, we belong to the family of Christ.

I want to make two suggestions today on how St. Regis Parish can deepen our membership in the family of Christ. Here are two ways we can listen for the will of God. The first is to read the KEY to the News, and the second is to join a home church.

Let me explain. We hear many voices--on the radio and TV, in the paper and magazines. The voice of our Church can get lost. We estimate that only one of every four St. Regis families takes home the diocesan newspaper. My first suggestion is let's make it a summer project that everybody reads the KEY. If we hear the voice of the Church, it may help us hear the voice of God.

My second suggestion is to join a home church. A home church is a group of people meeting in someone's home to share faith. We have many home churches already in the parish, and I think they're a great way to deepen faith. We can help you set up your own group or join one that's already going. Some meet weekly, some meet a few times a year, but together people are listening to other members, and listening for the will of God.

Once we've heard God's voice we only need to do his will. And that will make us family.