



## ***A Theological Moment With Fr. Jim***

### ***“Availability, Emotionality and Empathy***

So, are you ready for your birthday diner Sunday afternoon? “No! she says. I have a change of plans. “What do you want me to do with your birthday gift?” I asked. She said, “Forget about it!” “Wow, this is a shock” I said. “What is the problem?” “You really have not been available to me lately” she answered. “What are you talking about? Every few weeks we have dinner” I explained. She reiterates: “You have not been available to me emotionally. You seem disconnected, like you don’t care.”

Then I remembered the sign in my dentist, Dr. Tom Warwick’s office: “Ignore your teeth and they will go away. “Uh, oh! In my business and in my self centeredness, I really had not been attentive to her needs. She was not going to waste her emotional energy and would perhaps look elsewhere.

This was not only a good lesson for close relationships, but for shepherding and guiding people We read in Matthew 9:36-10:8: “at the sight of the crowds, Jesus’ heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd.”

Like the story I shared about a relationship gone south, the leaders of the faith (Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes) were unavailable to the needs of the people. Not only were these leaders supposed to guide like a caring shepherd, the leaders were supposed to love the people. How does one care for another? How does one care for so many? Availability means empathy - connecting with another’s story, pains and concerns. First we want to connect with others. We do that with our eyes, our listening and the expression of our faith - our body language and then our words. For me, Deacon Chris Barrett was that lesson. Once he meets you, he doesn’t forget your story. I’ve watched him walk into a room, speak and address each person by name and ask about their personal life from a conversation they had several weeks or even months ago. You are treated like the only one in the room and even though there may be twenty people present. The good news is that empathy can be learned. It can be practiced. One says to oneself: “I am connecting now and this person, this group has my attention. It take work an is draining for some, but if we want to be different that the Pharisees and Sadducees, we get with it.

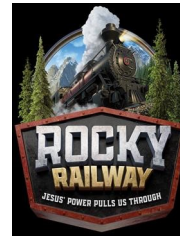
Jesus of Nazareth is empathy and availability incarnate. In today’s gospel, before he sends them out, they are learning and practicing the love Jesus shows. So then they are sent out. Perhaps this is a test.

Listening with our hears and to another heart is what we are called to do. Sometimes the little things people say alerts us to the need or to their loneliness. “Mary, I notice there are tears in your eyes.”

## ***Parish News & Announcements***

**Eucharistic Ministers Meeting, Sunday June 25:** Bob Burke will host a very important meeting following the service for all Eucharistic Ministers and all who would like to become a Eucharistic Minister. Is this ministry calling you?

### **Vacation Bible School: July 17-21, 2023.**



**ALL ABOARD!!!** We have six passengers already! Who’s ready to join them and hop on board the Rocky Railway?

Registration forms are available on the table in the commons or see Alice Doeppe.

### **Today’s Readings:**

1st Reading: Exodus 19:2

Psalms 100

We are his people, the sheep of his flock.

2nd Reading: Romans 5:6-11

Gospel: Matthew 9:36-10:9

Year to date financial report (includes E-giving):

As of March 31:

Income: \$63,539.46

Expenses: \$63,522.27

Balance: \$ 17.09

### **June Birthdays**

02: Stephanie Hamilton

Travis Williams

06: Katherine Hampton

08: Pam Skirvan

16: Phil Hampton

19: John Evans

Joyce Hing

21: Beau Elrich

30: Patsy Notestein

### **June Anniversaries**

12: Donald & Patsy Notestein

13: Bob & Sandra Burke

Chuck & Pat Hirtz

24: Les & Marie Leslie

28: Keith & Kathleen Hamilton

30: Chene & Emily Heady