

Pastoral Newsletter – October 2017

“When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess it, and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord God will choose as a dwelling for his name.” – Deuteronomy 26:1-2

Grace and peace to you all, my friends and family of the Neighbors in Christ Parish. I simply love this time of year when the nights are cool and the days are still warm, though a sweater or light jacket is still within an arm’s reach. As you may have noticed, there seems to be more and more corn and beet trucks roaring down the road awaiting their spots at the elevators and piles, only to head back out to the fields to do it again.

We must commend and thank our farmers and agricultural workers for the great work they do. They not only support our local economies, but also deliver the necessary food and grain that is harvested to feed the world. Every single day I pray for their safety in the hopes that their machinery works properly, they choose the correct times to combine, and that they remain out of harm’s way going to and from their destinations.

October 2017 observes the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation where a Catholic monk began to create a harvest of his own. He believed that over 1000 years of Roman tradition needed simple changes in practice, but what really happened was that the world was flipped upside down. Change swept throughout the land, and continues today. Luther never meant for the harvest to be as fruitful as it had become, but tradition and identity took over, along with some significant theological differences that unfortunately continue to divide we followers of the Risen Christ. I equate it to children playing in the same sandbox: the sand is the foundation of the faith, but each kid stays in his or her own section and rarely asks to share with one another. And I lament that. We are closer in our beliefs than we are apart.

Literalism, ritual, and rules divide, but the harvest still comes each year. Therefore, I chose these verses from Deuteronomy; we still come to worship, still add to the offering plate, help clean up when needed, teach our children, and volunteer when asked. Our first fruits are manifested inside and outside of the church buildings we serve because we are church together as a parish. We are the example that Christ calls us to be in our communities and in our homes. But if there is something that you are interested in doing, or have questions about why or why we do not do something...please ask me, or someone in a leadership role. We are always looking for your first fruits to be expressed and we can always use more help.

I hope you enjoy the turn of the season and seriously consider the gifts that our loving God has bestowed upon you – please share our fruits with the rest of us. Enjoy your month, and I look forward to seeing you in worship.

Rev. Erik Karlson

Pastor, Neighbors in Christ Parish