

We moved up to Bellevue the summer before eighth grade. My new school was Ringdall Junior High. About this time I had a big growth spurt. I was probably 6'3" that summer. So, when I landed at this new neighborhood and school some of the guys in my class assumed that I was going to be a great addition to the basketball team. I was tall, therefore, I must be good at basketball. But, unfortunately, I wasn't. I had played a little back in Oregon, but it was never my sport. I liked football better. Some of my new friends talked about playing pick-up basketball games as the season came closer. I put them off. It was still football season, I said. But deep down I just wanted to delay the moment when it became obvious that I stunk at basketball – and saw the disappointment and derision on their face at my awkward play.

Eventual, it couldn't be put off any longer. It was late fall. Football was over. People were moving on to basketball – and I was invited once again to an after school pick up game. So, I went and played my best. But it turned out just as I feared. Let's just say my friends were

underwhelmed by my abilities. That was pretty obvious from their reactions. There wasn't any more talk about how I could contribute to the team (although I did make the school team as a backup center). Several years later, my neighbor who had played with me that day, let me know. "Remember that first day we played? Boy, you were really awful."

In our second reading from I Corinthians 10 we hear Paul tell the Corinthian Christians, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God . . . Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." Notice here, that Paul is telling these new Christians that being a Disciple of Jesus looks like something. Discipleship takes action. It changes the way we live. And we learn to be good at it by imitating those who are already good. Paul tells them. "Look at me and do what I do, because I learned from this incredible teacher, Jesus." Paul has a high expectation of what Jesus can do and change in a human life –

“Whatever you do, do it for the glory of God.” But he isn’t assuming that they are good at that yet – but he does tell them to get better.

Going back to that story from my boyhood basketball experience, I think many Catholics feel like I did back then when we talk about living the faith. People look at us and expect things from us of a religious nature that we just can’t do. There’s all this talk of Discipleship and that we’re parts of the Body of Christ and light to the world. We should be out there evangelizing, etc. And from the outside maybe we do look like we’re capable of those things. We go to church all the time. We make use of some of the opportunities the parish offers. We try to educate our kids in the faith.

But it just like my 6’3” frame suggesting that I could play basketball well. I looked the part, but I hadn’t learned how to do that yet. So it is with the faith. We dread and avoid engaging in those religious practices we know deep down we’re not ready for. We fear

how we'll feel, and how those supposedly holy people will react, when it becomes obvious just how weak and ignorant our faith really is.

That is what the Rerouting project is all about – equipping us for Discipleship. We shouldn't assume anything just because we're cradle Catholics. I was tall. That didn't mean I was good at basketball. We are members of the Church. That doesn't mean we're powerful Disciples yet. I'm not assuming that. But I do say we can grow. There is no reason to dread engaging the faith because we may not be “good” at it yet. As your Pastor I give you permission to be an “unskilled” Catholic right now. I want you on the team no matter what your skill level is at the moment. But I do want to offer a way we can all learn to imitate Christ better, just as well as Paul did, and grow in our confidence in Jesus.

Lent is starting this week. (We usually give a book away each Lent. This year it will be a little late. It's a short book answering common questions about Catholicism – one reason we shy away from

evangelizing is we don't have answers to people's simple questions about our faith).

But the main focus this year will be Rerouting, a 14-week homily series upon the basic Gospel message. All masses will get the same homily each week. And on Wednesday nights there will be opportunities for more teaching and small group discussions of the week's topic. To help you engage in this I would like you to turn on your phone right now. And take one of the Rerouting cards in the pews. This is an easy way to get the Rerouting video links and to RSVP for the Wednesday night classes. It's called Flocknote. It's free and you don't have to download anything. Just take a minute to sign up and you'll receive text or e-mail messages with the video links. It'll stay private. At the end of Rerouting it will discontinue unless you want to hear about other parish opportunities. You can unsubscribe at any time.

So, here's how to do it. Just text the three letter keyword – HFK (no spaces) to 84576. Make sure your auto-spelling-corrector doesn't

change the text. Send the message when you're ready. Once in, Flocknote will send you back a message with a link that you'll need to click to complete the process. Again, text HFK to 84576. If you have trouble, you can email to : rerouting@hfkparish.org, or please talk to one of the Rerouting team in the east narthex after mass. Thank you for trying this out.