

[Prayer] As we begin Rerouting today I'd like you write down an answer to a question – perhaps on your note sheet. Nobody else will see this. The question is: Why did I come to mass today? Give the real answer, not the one you think you should write. Nobody else will see it. Put something down. I'll wait for moment for you [pause].

Maybe your answer is, "Because I'm Catholic. That's what we're supposed to do." Or maybe it's, "My Mom made me come." Or maybe it's, "I don't know."

So, I want to describe for you a miracle that happens at mass every Sunday. No, it's not the one you think I'm talking about. The miracle (and this is honestly not said with judgment or mockery – because I get it. All three of those responses would have been true of me at one point or another), but the miracle is that every week throughout America most Catholics at mass don't sing or respond to the prayers. They don't listen to the homily (honestly, I'm not being judgmental). Many don't believe in the Real Presence in the Eucharist

or believe many of the things the Catholic Church teaches. They deliberately come late and leave early – BUT (and here’s the miracle) THEY STILL COME! Why? Why do they – we -- you -- come?

I think it’s because many of us are filled with questions, and hope that maybe we can find the answers to life here. We ask, “Why am I here? Where am I going? Why is there so much evil in the world and my life? Am I loveable? How can I be happy? What happens to me when I die?” But from the typical lack of response to the mass it’s obvious that our hopes for answers are usually disappointed.

And that’s why we’re Rerouting. We’re on a 14 week mission to learn God’s answers to those questions, our purpose, our destiny, and why we can trust Him. I’m not claiming much originality here. Probably 75% of this will come straight from Fr. John Ricardo’s own talks in his parish in Michigan – but I’ll add some of my own twists and stories. There will be the same homily at every mass each week – it’s a homily series. You will be given an outline and place to write notes. Bring a pen

and Bible. There will also be a few questions on the worksheets to take home and discuss during the week in your families. We'll record and post the homilies on our web page, so if you miss them you can catch up. And every Wednesday from 7:00 – 8:30 in the Social Hall we're offering a deeper dive into the subject of the previous Sunday's homily. It will provide a chance to get more information, ask questions, and have facilitated small group discussions. We're videoing those talks as well. By the way, there are cards in the pews with information on how to register for those Wednesday evenings. But you can start any time.

“Repent and believe in the gospel.” When we come to mass what's happening is often confusing and meaningless because we don't know the big story -- the gospel. The priest is up here in strange robes, doing this ritual, saying things you don't even understand. It's as if you went to see a movie, but you got the start time wrong. You show up an hour late to a two-hour movie. Why did that character just slap that guy? Why is everybody laughing at that line? What's the meaning of the

green shiny thing? That is how we can hear the scripture readings at mass. We don't know the story.

The key to understanding the Bible and our place in the universe can already be found in the first three chapters of Genesis, the very first book of the Bible. Miss that and you're clueless the rest of the way. So, after a few weeks of setting the stage we're going to look closely at those scriptures. You might want to start reading those chapters now.

What's the goal of Rerouting? Two goals: First, to help those who have not yet decided to live lives for Jesus – to start doing that. Second, for those who have – to surrender more fully. And, this is important, because some will say, "I already know all that." But we are meant to accompany others on their own journeys.

The title "Rerouting" of course comes from what some phone apps saying when we're trying to follow their directions to get somewhere we've never been before. When we take a wrong turn we're told, "Rerouting." That's what we're all about at Holy Family this

Lent and Easter – rerouting our lives’ direction towards Jesus. Please pray for this project and come with an open mind to mass.

To conclude, Fr. John Ricardo recommends the movie “Hacksaw Ridge” as an aid to getting all this. I had never seen it before, so I watched it last week. It’s the true story of Desmond Doss, the first Conscientious Objector to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor. During WWII Doss volunteers for the U. S. Army. The only problem is that he refuses to carry a weapon. He wants to be a combat medic. But when he shows up at boot camp his sergeant and company commander abuse him mercilessly for cowardice and undermining the morale of the unit. They try everything to get him to drop out: physical violence, peer pressure. They threaten him with prison. But he holds on to his moral position. Finally, Doss is allowed to study to become a medic.

The second half of the film takes place on Okinawa in 1945. Doss’ company is part of the invasion of that island, trying to take it from the Japanese. His company is ordered to take Hacksaw Ridge. To get there

they first must climb this cliff via rope ladders. The battle on top of the cliff is bloody. (Warning: this is a violent, R rated movie). The Americans get pushed back off the cliff to the lower ground in defeat.

But Doss remains on top of the cliff, hidden from the Japanese. And throughout the next day and night he risks his life caring for the wounded soldiers and sneaking them down the cliff by lowering them by rope – 75 of them. Each time Doss lowered a soldier to safety He prayed to God, “Please, just let me get one more.” As you can imagine, after that, the company’s opinion of him has changed forever.

Pope Francis has called the Catholic Church a field hospital on a battlefield. Jesus is the combat medic who put Himself in harm’s way to save us, those wounded by sin. Doss’ company Commander at the end of the film tells Doss, “I thought you were just a skinny kid. I didn’t know who you are.” So many of us are in that same position with Jesus. We misjudge him. We don’t know who He is. But we can find out. That

is what we're all about here. The Kingdom of God is at hand. It's now time to repent and believe in the Gospel.