

Bishop's Message on Adults at the Center to the parishioners of the Diocese of San Jose

3rd Sunday of Easter- April 30th, 2017

Gospel Reading: Road to Emmaus Lk: 24: 13-35

After Jesus appeared to his disciples on the road to Emmaus, they proclaimed, *"Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?"* This is what happens when we recognize Jesus' presence. Sometimes, though, we do not live with open eyes and burning hearts. Like the two disciples, we often need help to see the Word of God with eyes of faith.

Life can feel like an accelerating hurricane, and we frequently seek to anchor ourselves. Our relationship with Jesus Christ and the faith community is the anchor for well-being and spiritual growth.

The surgeon general says the most prevalent disease today is isolation. In the most connected age in history, what ails us the most is being disconnected. God wants to be in relationship with us. God made us for relationships. A relationship with God and others keep us moving toward Christian maturity.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has sought to significantly change the role of the laity from spectators to participants. Adult faith formation is at the root of this participation. What you received as children is not sufficient to grow in faith as adults within today's Church.

Jesus frees captives. Adult faith formation frees adults from what ensnares them. Like the Disciples who walked with Jesus to Emmaus, our fast-paced culture can prevent us seeing what is right in front of us. Emancipatory learning allows adults to reflect on how we live to find ways to align our lives with the message of Jesus. Adult faith formation calls on us to do it Jesus' way.

Adult faith formation:

- Is foundational for the success of our diocesan evangelization initiative.
- Is key to deepening our relationship with Jesus.
- Promotes active membership in the Christian community.
- Prepares adults to act as disciples in service to the world.

I encourage you to *engage* with the hearts of adults, *build* them up in the faith, and *send* them into the world as disciples.

"Let us strengthen our commitment and intensify our efforts to help the adults in our communities be touched and transformed by the life-giving message of Jesus, to explore its meaning, experience its power, and live in its light as faithful adult disciples today. Let us do our part with creativity and vigor, our hearts aflame with love to empower adults to know and live the message of Jesus. This is the Lord's work. In the power of the Spirit it will not fail but will bear lasting fruit for the life of the world."

—US bishops, *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*, 183