

BUSY PARISH RETREAT: HOMILY  
 8th Sunday in Ordinary Time  
 February 25/26, 2017  
 by Fr. Mike O'Brien ©  
 St. Clement Parish  
 1104 N. Alexander St.  
 Plant City, FL 33563

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After being appointed pastor for the first time in 1988, I asked a veteran pastor if he had any advice for me? He told me Mike, you're going to discover that there are three kinds of parishioners in your parish:

- There are those who MAKE things happen
- There are others who WATCH things happen
- And finally, there are parishioners who don't know what's happening!

The book we are using for our Busy Parish Retreat [HOLD UP A COPY] is a result of research the author, Matthew Kelly did, while trying to discover, what percentage of people who attend Mass every weekend, belong to group number one, AND MAKE THINGS HAPPEN.

What percentage of an average parish, do you think, belongs to group number one AND MAKES THINGS HAPPEN?

What percent of an average parish, do you think, belongs to group number one AND MAKES THINGS HAPPEN? 90%? 80%?

His scientific research discovered that in an AVERAGE parish, in an AVERAGE parish, only 7%, 7% of the parishioners, are what he describes as Dynamic Catholics and are the ones, who MAKES things happen in their parishes.

Evidently Matthew Kelly hasn't visited Saint Clement!!!!!!

The author became very curious on what made these 7% so active in their faith? He discovered that these 7%, practiced certain spiritual HABITS every day. He said, that there were FOUR SIGNS or SPIRITUAL HABITS, that can be discerned in these Dynamic Catholic's, his term for what we call at Saint Clement; a Saint in Training.

He then wondered, what would happen, if a parish ENCOURAGED every member, every member, to become a Dynamic Catholic, to be a SAINT IN TRAINING?

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Church, there are more than 7% who are "involved" at Saint Clement, just look at our Make Your Own Strawberry Shortcake Ministry! However, to be considered a Dynamic Catholic, to be considered a Saint in Training, the Four Signs or Four Habits, need to be practiced regularly and year-round in our lives. The Living of these 4 Habits, is what made the difference in the 7%. The 7% ARE BY NO MEANS PERFECT, but they INTENTIONALLY work at being a Saint in Training, EVERY DAY and not just on Sunday!

In the first chapter of our book, the author describes for us these Four Habits. He believes that they have a particular order and are sequential. The first is PRAY; the second habit is STUDY; the third is GENEROSITY, which I describe as the need to SERVE; and the Fourth habit, is EVANGELIZATION. As I studied his four habits, I realized that an important element in Jesus' ministry was missing, so at Saint Clement we have added a fifth Habit, which is COMMUNITY. When Jesus began His public ministry, He gathered 12 disciples and formed them into the very first, Small Christian Community. Jesus knew that faith was more caught than taught and that we would need support in living these Habits, that is why I have added COMMUNITY to his list.

During our Busy Parish Retreat we will be looking at these Five Habits, let's see how they compare with what we will be reading in the book:

**The Book's 4 Signs    ST. CLEMENT'S 5 HABITS**

<b>PRAY</b>	<b>PRAY</b>
<b>STUDY</b>	<b>STUDY</b>
<b>GENEROSITY</b>	<b>SERVE</b>
	<b>COMMUNITY</b>
<b>EVANGELIZATION</b>	<b>EVANGELIZATION</b>

For our 2017 Busy Parish Retreat, we are going to focus not on all Five Habits, just on the FIRST one: PRAY.

In today's Gospel, what is the major lesson Jesus is teaching us? He's instructing the apostles and us, NOT TO WORRY, about what we are to eat or drink or what we should be wearing. Church these are important. If you tell your landlord or Bank, you're not worried about paying your monthly rent or mortgage, how do you think they would respond?

Church, what is the underlying lesson Jesus is trying to teach you and me? What is the underlying lesson Jesus is trying to teach you and me?

You and I might have all the money in the world, all the food and drink we need, and our closets are filled with shoes and clothing but unless we have our PRIORITIES straight, unless we have our PRIORITIES straight, we are heading in the wrong direction!

Jesus sums up his instructions by saying "Seek first the Kingdom of God", "Seek first the Kingdom of God", "Seek first the Kingdom of God". Anyone need this repeated a Fourth time?

Church, Jesus KNOWS that there is NO SUBSTITUTE for an authentic relationship with God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit! Church if the Trinity isn't FIRST in our lives; NOTHING ELSE ETERNALLY MATTERS. That is why the First Habit we will be LEARNING together during our Busy Parish Retreat, is PRAY.

I'm not just talking about saying prayers. I'm talking about having a personal relationship with God, where you have made a decision of the HEAD AND HEART to make the TRINITY FIRST in your life.

I'm not just talking about saying prayers. I'm talking about having a personal relationship with God, where you have made a decision of the HEAD AND HEART to make the TRINITY FIRST in your life.

Church I KNOW of no other way to sustain and develop a Dynamic relationship with the Trinity, other than through PRAYER. The other Four Habits, BUILD on the first Habit, which is [ PRAY]

Parish Family, according to Matthew's Kelly's findings in his book, what percentage of parishioners are Making Things Happen? [7%] Imagine if we doubled, tripled or quadrupled that percent here at Saint Clement!!! What would be the impact on our parish? What would be the impact on Plant City?

Church, close to 1600 parishioners have signed up to read this book together. Every weekend, when you come to MASS, you will be able to ask your neighbor; "How their retreat is coming along?" You'll be able to support them as they will be able to support you, in your implementing of what you read. Isn't that awesome?

Last week we blessed our books, during the week special inserts have been added to the inside front cover, which describes the Four Habits of the book and the FIVE Habits we use at Saint Clement. [SLIDE] You will also find in your own book, a book mark, [SLIDE] that tells you what pages you need to read each day. Don't WORRY, we have made it very easy in this first segment of our Busy Parish Retreat. You are being asked to only read one page a day, occasionally 2. On Sundays, you have a day off or it can be used to "catch up" on your reading. Church, I don't just want you to read the page each day, I want you to think about it, ponder it and reflect on it, for YOU are on RETREAT!!!

To help you with your commitment to read a page a day, every other Sunday, we're going to have an instant Busy Parish Retreat survey. [SLIDE] As you come to Mass, you'll be given a simple survey card, which will ask you; how many pages did you read that week? You will fill it out before Mass and then put it in the collection basket. The following week, in my column, I'll show you how WE as a parish are doing.

Between now and our next Busy Parish Retreat Weekend on May 6 & 7, we as a parish family will be reading and reflecting on just the first two chapters. You may want to read more and that is ok, but first, be sure to immerse yourselves with chapters One & Two. Each week in my column and on our Website, there will be ideas, suggestions and testimonies on how to get the most out of YOUR Busy Parish Retreat.

After Mass please pick up your book either in English or Spanish under the carport. Please just one per person. If you want to send one to your friends or family, you can order directly from the book company. If you didn't sign up for a book, if you didn't sign up for a book, please see one of the HELPERS at the tables and they will sign you up.

Church, Jesus in today's Gospel, has given us the THEME for our 2017 Busy Parish Retreat: "Seek first the Kingdom of God", Friends, Jesus in today's Gospel has given us the THEME for our 2017 Busy Parish Retreat: "Seek first the Kingdom of God".

By Seeking First, the Kingdom of God EVERY WEEK, we will be well on our way, towards becoming a Dynamic Catholic Parish, where the MAJORITY of our members and not just 7%, WILL BE MAKING

THINGS HAPPEN; BECAUSE WE WILL INTENTIONALLY BE LIVING, THE FIRST SPIRITUAL HABIT! **PRAY**

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PARISH FAMILY OF SAINT CLEMENT, will you join me and the other 1,600 parishioners in becoming SAINTS IN TRAINING THAT ARE TRINITY CENTERED AND DISCIPLESHIP DRIVEN?

Amen? Amen!

**HOMILY Busy Parish Retreat Week One Master copy**