



An Open Lenten Letter to Our Parishioners.

The recent commercials for "Catholics Come Home" has been misunderstood by some of the critics of our Catholic Faith. Catholics Come Home was never about filling pews or strengthening parish finances. It's about unity and the very identity of the Church. Vatican II's first and foremost teaching stated that we have to see our self as the people of God. All of us who are baptized are one with Christ. The church belongs to the members and even inactive members should take ownership of their church family. But that family remains broken as long as those members are estranged, so it's the job of Christians to reconcile with each other and the Church.

Last year we encouraged our attending parishioners to give out pamphlets to those who no longer attend our parish community by telling them that they were missed. We do indeed miss those who have left us for any reason. The parish also prays weekly for those who no longer worship with us. This Lenten season, I encourage you to return to St. John the Baptist faith community. I also encourage you to participate in the many opportunities the parish provides for you to learn more and become more active in your catholic faith.

I learned very early in my priesthood that misunderstandings and hurts can happen because the Church is made up of people, and people can hurt one another by what they say, what they don't say, and how they react to or care for one another. No one should be unjustly hurt, especially if that hurt comes from the very organization that was created to live the life of Jesus. I would like to take this opportunity during the first Sunday of Lent to apologize to you for any hurt that has come from the Church or her leadership.

I ask you to be reconciled with the Church during this time of Lent, and if you have been away, come home to the practice of your faith. For those of you who have not left, thank you for your faith, it's because of your prayers and participation that this parish is a vibrant faith family.