

## **Bishop's Appeal 2015 Homily**

Hello friends, this is Bishop David Ricken. It is good to be with you today through this recorded message.

The heart of our faith is being a disciple of Christ. The mission of the Church is the work of Building Disciples of Christ. Today in our scriptures, we have heard three examples of discipleship.

We know that Job had a very difficult life. He lost almost everything he had. Yet, in spite of his difficulties, he remained faithful to God. He is a real example for all of us.

St. Paul speaks of being entrusted by God to preach the Gospel. That is his stewardship. He gives his life to make disciples, for that is God's call.

In the Gospel today, Jesus heals Simon Peter's mother in law. Once healed, she begins serving those in her home, and Jesus goes and finds others who also are in need of healing.

Becoming a disciple of Christ is a lifelong process. It happens as we are introduced to Jesus, as we grow in our faith and prayer life, and as we are helped, supported and challenged along the way.

Through your support of the Bishop's Appeal, we are able to Build Disciples of Christ here in the Diocese of Green Bay. This year, we are able to help 25,000 children encounter Jesus. They are learning how to pray through our faith formation programs and our Catholic schools. That is a lot of disciple-building!

We know that disciple building begins in the home. That is why our Bishop's Appeal also helps to support our Marriage Preparation programs. Strong marriages and families are the foundation of the Church and of society as a whole. Our families are places of prayer and discipleship building.

Sometimes life is hard, as it was for Job, and for those healed by Jesus. At those times, we need to reach out to help those in need. Again, your support of the Bishop's Appeal does that for thousands of people who are assisted by the many programs of Catholic Charities. From budget counseling to adoption services to mental health counseling, Catholic Charities reaches out in care to build up our sisters and brothers.

This year, we have begun a six year process of building disciples that I am calling "Disciples on the Way." Over the next two years, we will begin by focusing on prayer. I am so excited that I am able to go around the diocese to offer days of prayer, sharing some of the ways I have learned to pray over the years, in hopes that it might be helpful to you and to others.

Your support of the Bishop's Appeal makes this, and so much more possible. We truly are about the task of Building Disciples of Christ. And I am so grateful for your generosity. After all, Building Disciples of Christ is a call for each of us. Your participation in the Bishop's Appeal is one real concrete way of answering that call. Thank you so much for your generosity in the past, and I ask you to prayerfully consider your gift to this year's Bishop's Appeal.

I now invite your pastor, priest or pastoral leader to share how you can make your Appeal pledge. May God bless you and your family during this exciting time as we build Disciples of Christ in our families, our parishes, and throughout our diocese. We truly are disciples on the way!

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