

St. Cecilia's 100th Anniversary Mass

My dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, Happy Anniversary! Congratulations to all of you who are now, and have been in past, such wonderful and faithful members of this Parish Church. Also, special congratulations to Fr. Edwin, your pastor, and the staff and volunteers of this amazing place!

The readings in these days before Advent center on being prepared for the coming of the Lord. We are to be ready by being faithful to God's call in our lives, and by using wisely the gifts and talents we have received from God for the good of His Holy People.

The first readings of the masses this week are taken from the Book of Maccabees. The Maccabees were a family who helped the Jewish people to remain faithful to God during a time of terrible persecution. The secular world around the Jewish people at that time ridiculed their faith, persecuted them for being believers, and tried to force the Jewish people to be unfaithful to God's law. We have the story today about the seven brothers and their mother, and how they stayed strong in the faith even as they gave up their lives. Then, in the gospel passage for today from St. Luke's Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the Talents, and how we need to put our talents to work for the Kingdom of God.

Our times are not so different from the times of the Maccabees. The secular world around us pushes us to forget our faith, or that faith doesn't matter. Almost every family has those members who don't go

to church anymore, or who now say they don't believe. Sometimes they even try to make us feel bad for being faithful to the Church. Thankfully, they are not yet driving us to martyrdom, like the Maccabees. But it does point to the fact that we still have a mission. As missionary disciples we are still to put our talents to use in our parish communities to help others to come to the Lord and be active members of His Body. This is what the New Evangelization is about! As the Holy Father has said, its' not a new gospel, and it's not a new Jesus. It is a new invitation to discover God and the place of faith in our lives!

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, has pointed out that parishes — even if they are 100 years old! — need to still have a “vision of a **Church** that goes out of itself, a **Church** that is missionary, a **Church** that is merciful and a **Church** that evangelizes, even in its everyday activities.”

St. Cecilia's has 100 years of offering service in this way! And, we are challenged now to continue that legacy for another 100 years! Wouldn't it be wonderful if, 100 years from now, the people of the St. Cecilia's of that time could say, “the parishioners here in 2019 made the difference! They were faithful and true, and we are here today because of them!” My friends, let that be your legacy! And may God bless you!