

**DEACON TONY'S JUNE 16, 2024 HOMILY
FOR THE
11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME.**

The Kingdom of God is also known as the "REIGN" of God. It is not a place. We aspire to be an active part of God's family.

Ezekiel used a metaphor to present a new vision for Judea after the shock of the Babylonian exile. Similarly, Jesus used parables.

These images are easier to grasp and harder to forget. Like God TRANSPLANTING a branch so that it may bear fruit.

Paul explains to the Corinthians that they must 1st desire to be fruitful and agree to cooperate with the will of God in order to bear fruit that lasts for eternity.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish the Fathers in this community a FRUITFUL day. I want to share with you what being a REAL FATHER means to me. God planted that small seed inside of my heart at my Baptism. I have always been a faithful Catholic. I attended Mass faithfully. I went to Confession and made the Sacraments that were required. I attended Catholic High School and took three years of Latin. We got married in the Church and we had our first child when I was 23 yrs. old and our second when I was 27 yrs.

I believed in raising responsible children and I wanted them to be independent.

When I was approaching 30 yrs. of age, I attended a CRHP weekend and it was on this weekend, in the confessional, that I began to nurture that small seed that had been neglected inside of me since birth. The Lord was now able to show me what the Reign of God was really about. It is about others, especially my wife and daughters.

My children saw me going through the motions but really was neglecting my duty to be there for them. My oldest was 7 years old when I truly put her before my selfish needs. Later when she was about 16, she shared with me her experience of my renewal. I was going to bale on the weekend and go to the next one (for the second time).

She said that she saw me walking (all by myself) up the hill to church that Saturday morning. She said that when I came home, I brought Jesus with me.

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When I attended the classes to put on a weekend the older members told me how lucky I was to the Renewal when my kids were young because their children were older, and they didn't follow their dads. (I guess they were not raised with Jesus).

I saw things in my life in a NEW LIGHT. Like when I said that I wanted to raise independent children; the Lord told Me:

“YOU JUST DON'T WANT THEM TO GROW UP AND BORROW MONEY FROM YOU”

I have 5 grandchildren and I am so proud to say that they are all active in their parishes, being lectures, Eucharistic ministers and leading in Confirmation classes. I enjoy discussing homilies with them.

I hope all fathers will come to understand their roles as true Catholic fathers and represent Jesus to them on earth.