

**Homily – Family Faith Day Mass
Sunday, July 10, 2011
Altoona Curve Ballpark**

Good Afternoon Everyone.

Are you excited to be here?

I am excited to be here to celebrate this Family Faith Day Mass with you.

This is an awesome way to share our Catholic faith with each other from all over the diocese and with family, friends, and visitors from other places.

This is an awesome way for us to give witness to our Catholic faith for the benefit of others.

That witness is happening by the very fact that through all the publicity surrounding this event, a lot of people are aware that we are gathered for this Mass and the fun and fellowship that follows.

How many children are here who are grade school age? Let me hear you give a big cheer!

How many young people are here who are high school or college age? Let me hear you give a big cheer?

How many parents and grandparents are here? Let me hear you give a big cheer?

How many family or friends or visitors are here from places outside of our Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown? Let me hear you give a big cheer!

Thank you for coming today to give witness to our Catholic faith!

That witness is also happening by what many of you did when you entered this place by donating some non-perishable food items for those who are in need.

How many donated some food to help the poor and the hungry? Let me hear a big cheer!

I want to tell you that such a simple thing as being here for this Family Faith Day Mass and sharing some food for the poor is exactly what our Savior, Jesus Christ is talking about in the Gospel reading today.

**You are probably thinking that Jesus was talking about seeds.
If you thought that, you are right.
In the first part of the Gospel, Jesus says that the seed symbolizes the
Word of God.**

**We just listened to the Word of God in the Scripture readings for this
Mass. But there are so many other ways in which we hear the Word of
God; in which we share the Word of God.**

**We do that when we pray together in school, or at home with our
families, or when you are driving to work in the Morning.**

**We do that when we share our faith with our children by making sure
that they learn about our Catholic faith and that they are well-prepared
to receive the sacraments.**

**We do that when we go to Mass every Sunday as a family and
encourage others to join us.**

**We do that when we are not afraid to mention to someone that you
might not be able to join them at that moment because you have
something really important to do, like going to church for the sacrament
of Penance, volunteering to help with the parish religious education
program or to assist with activities at one of our Catholic schools, going
to the funeral home and to the church for a funeral Mass -- because you
believe in Christ's promise to bring comfort and healing to those who
are mourning, or because you believe in Christ's promise of eternal life
and you are not afraid if other's know that's what you believe.**

**There are so many ways that we hear the word of God and others hear
it from us, even when we don't open the Bible or even say anything.**

You know the old saying, "actions speak louder than words."

**In the last part of the Gospel reading today, Jesus Christ our Savior
tells us that the seed also represents the way people receive or don't
receive the Word of God.**

**Some do not receive God's word because Satan steals it away from them
because there is no one there to explain it to them; It doesn't grow any**

roots because the soil is shallow; there is no one there to give fertilize and water them; There are problems in their life; maybe at home or school or work; The glamorous and fun things that are all around us occupy are so attractive that they forget about the Word of God

It may be easy for us to say, if that's what happens, then that's there fault.

But that's not what Jesus is telling us in the Gospel. Jesus makes it very clear that in order for the Word of God to be heard by everyone, and to become a real part of their life

Someone has to not only say something, but do something.

That's what happens when you donated some food for the poor today. The people who receive that food are having a tough time in their lives and it's not all their fault.

It's very hard for people in those situations to hear the Word of God and to understand and believe that the Word of God applies to them.

The last thing that they need during their hard time is to have someone start preaching at them about changing their life.

The first thing that they need during their hard time is to have someone show them how the Word of God does change people's lives and it happens when those who receive the Word of God then share the Word of God by what they do. Remember? A lot of times, actions speak louder than words.

That saying is true in our Mass today.

We have heard the Word of God loud and clear.

Jesus has reminds us that he is the Word of God, that he is the sower that plants the seed of faith in us, that a lot of people have trouble with that seed of faith being planted in them, that we who have received the Word of God need to do something to share that Word and help that seed of faith grow for others, that just a small thing like giving witness to our Catholic faith by coming here today and sharing food with the poor is really a big thing.

Jesus reminds us today in this Family Faith Day Mass that actions do speak louder than words.

The most important action is the mystery of this Holy Eucharist in which we remember the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Savior; we give praise and thanks to God for the promise of eternal life that we share in Christ; we give praise and thanks to God for all the blessings that God gives us: family, faith, and friendship with Christ and with one another; we receive the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ as our spiritual food so that we can do those little things that are really big things like giving witness to our Catholic faith by sharing the Word of God or by helping to feed the poor.

Today is an awesome day to give witness to our Catholic faith.

How many grade school children are excited to do that today? Let me hear a big cheer!

How many young people of high school and college age are excited to do that today? Let me hear a big cheer!

How many parents and grandparents and adults are excited to do that today? Let me hear a big cheer!

Thank you again for being here today for this Family Faith Day Mass. Thanks be to God for giving us this day.