



**St. Julie Billiard Parish - Making Disciples:
An Introduction to Our Parish Faith Formation Ministry**

*The homily for the weekend of September 9 and 10, 2007 was given by
Jeanine Jensen, Pastoral Associate and Fr. Jon Pedigo, Pastor.*



[Jeanine Jensen](#)

Thirty years ago I walked into a parish that was just being formed. It was exciting to be part of building a new church, and a year later it was very exciting to be part of building a vision as a catechist. The Sisters of Notre Dame, who were with us, kept asking us the question “what does it mean to be a disciple?” That question has never been fully answered for me or for this parish because to be a disciple means to be in relationship with Christ; A healthy, holy relationship that continually grows, calls us to conversion and transform our lives.



Jesus is very clear in today’s gospel of what it takes to be in relationship the Holy One. When I heard the familiar phrase “Whoever does not carry his/her own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple” caused me to think of the responsibilities that come with being a disciple.

The Notre Dame Sisters and the three pastors that we have had have led me to see that our main responsibility as disciples is to help build the Reign of God NOW by building relationships with others, by sharing and putting our faith into action with children, youth and adults. By deliberate formation of leaders and service to others.



Over the years I have witnessed the growth of our faith formation sessions with children from 150 to 400 and more. I have seen our youth group grow from 20 to 80 participants. I have journeyed with some 20 people who have graduated from the Institute of Lay Ministry (a 3 yr. commitment to study and action) and others who have gone on to religious studies at Santa Clara. They have returned to our community to help form other leaders.



I've had the privilege of being a part of the growing pains as we have wrestled with the belief that Eucharist is the sacrament of commitment, not confirmation, and that to serve means to go beyond these walls into the market place and into the streets of Tijuana.

I have come to understand that journeying with others takes time to digest teachings of Jesus Christ and the Church, takes prayer and it takes visioning if we are to be passionate witnesses to the love of God and one another.



Father Jon Pedigo, Pastor

Our parish mission summarizes our visioning:

St. Julie Billiart Parish is a diverse, welcoming, and contemporary Catholic community nurtured by Word and Sacrament. The Table of Christ inspires our faith and commits us to bring his message of hope to the world.

We have attached 10 pledges to our Mission Statement and this year we will be concentrating on 3 of the 10 pledges. They are:

- *To strengthen religious education programs which foster more in-depth faith foundations for individuals and families in the parish.*
- *To enrich our parish lay leadership and recruit and train new leaders.*
- *To empower youth, young adults and lay ministers to have an active role in shaping the future of our parish.*

Our parish work is essentially about building discipleship through developing the faith lives of our parishioners. The job of discipleship development, is not solely the work of the staff – the work of making disciples, is the work of the entire faith community.

In order for us to create a community in which everyone sees his or her role as a disciple is not an easy task. For many of us, Christianity is about attending mass, sending our children to classes and making sure we “get” our sacraments. Christ came to make disciples of the nations.

The purpose of a parish is not to be a service station, dispensing sacraments as one would pull up to a gas station to fill up on gas. No, for us to become a parish in which every person understands that his or her role is to BE A DISCIPLE requires that we move from being a parish of programs, to a parish of relationships.



We have to get out of the notion that we are treating our parishioners like “clients” who come for sacraments to become a parish that takes every person and helps form them into disciples of Christ as “leaders” who will take responsibility in helping build the Kingdom of God. Our goal must be conversion of the person and not simply the registration of the family.

As we move in this direction, we recognize that the process of conversion is not neat and clean. Conversion is messy and inconsistent. The process of true, authentic transformation does not have conformity as its goal, but rather, communion with God and service to humanity.

In terms of concrete actions, our parish staff is undergoing weekly training in community development. Our faith formation programs from K-6th have a comprehensive curriculum with achievement standards which are in conformity to the newly established diocesan standards. Through your generous outpouring in last spring’s Diocesan Capital Campaign, we have been able to hire an additional staff person to work with parents of adolescents and our youth community.

We will also be developing faith formation opportunities for young adults and for those of us who have no children. These opportunities for faith development include retreats, workshops, mission work here and abroad and spiritual direction.



Let us begin to imagine what kind of parish community we can become if all of us put an effort towards this vision. Take time now to look at the “I want to become a disciple” sheet on your chair. Because we are deliberately moving in the direction of leadership development, we require additional catechists and classroom aids. Please indicate that you are willing to help out by circling that line. In addition to volunteer opportunities, we have adult faith formation opportunities. Please take time to circle the activities that most interest you. This does not mean that you are committed to a program, but rather, it will help our pastoral staff direct our resources in the appropriate areas of interest of the people. Now sign the card and put your email address on the card. If you don’t have an email address, please put your phone contact. Bring those cards forward to the collection baskets during Offertory. Thank you.



St. Julie Billiard Parish

ALL ARE WELCOME

TODOS SON BIENVENIDOS

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