

# SAID ED July 8, 2012

## We are all ministers of the Gospel

People do a lot of church visiting during the summer months as schedules change and people's patterns modify for the warm weather vacations. Recently I have also met a number of new people who were "checking us out" on Sunday morning as they try to decide which parish they will join. One of the things that they offer quite spontaneously is that they feel welcome and at home in our midst. That is good news to my ears since, in my book, the prime hallmark of any Christian community ought to be hospitality.

Our ushers and greeters do a fine job of setting the tone, but we are all ministers of hospitality and share the wonderful task of making others feel welcome in our midst. Thank you for taking this responsibility seriously.

A visitor commented to me about the way we list our staff in the bulletin. "Very interesting that you consider all the people of the parish ministers," she said. "This seems very inviting and comes across to me as an assurance that each person in this parish has an important role in the life of the community." Precisely!

It is my pastoral and theological understanding, based on the teaching of the Church in the documents of the Vatican II Council, that the "People of God" are the Church. By virtue of their baptism, the People of God are the primary ministers of the Church. I whole-heartedly believe that the leaders of the Council were Spirit inspired in articulating this teaching. My hope is that it will become a deeper reality if we keep working at it. But, it does take time to help the "People of God" take their rightful place in carrying out the ministry of our Church. History shows that we have not always seen ourselves this way. The notion of "the People of God" is deeply rooted in our Scriptural tradition and the early days of the church.

Our entire Parish Staff is here to assist the parishioners in their ministry as baptized women and men. In no way does my understanding of who the "People of God" are minimize my role as the ordained person who is called to preside at the celebration of our Sacraments, nor does it take away from my responsibility for the pastoral care and Christian Formation of parishioners. I take these roles seriously, willingly and most importantly, joyfully, as I share them with all the "People of God."

So, that's why the bulletin lists the "People of Assumption" as the parish ministers. One of my fondest dreams is that we all take our role as parish ministers seriously!

Have a great week!

*If you are traveling and are not sure where to find a Catholic church near you, go on-line at [www.masstimes.org](http://www.masstimes.org); type in your location and a list of parishes near by will pop onto your computer screen. In this day and age there is no reason why we can't find a church within a short distance of where we are staying. On the rare occasion when this is not possible, you can always tune in to the parish celebrations that are on our website.*

