

Saint Michael's Youth Conference;
Closing Eucharist, August 25, 2012
The Rev'd. Dr. Ross Hebb

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones.. Matthew 18:10

What do ya want? What DO YOU want? Perhaps now, at the end of St Mike's, you want a warm bed, mom's cooking and a good night's sleep. Those might be our immediate desires.

But what do you want at a deeper level? A wise man once said all men, all human beings, desire to be happy. Not just happy, but content and at peace. At peace with others and at peace with ourselves - in our own hearts and minds. We want to be at the point that when we lie down at night, those last thoughts which run through our minds about the day past are not ones of regret and frustration and when we wake in the morning we desire not to be filled with worry and fear for the day ahead.

But how do we get there? How do we accomplish happiness?

Our world, our society, sends us mixed, confused and confusing messages. The 1960's, that decade that I lived through, that casts its shadow over our entire culture, promised happiness. It said throw-off the old ways, the shackles of convention and of 'the Man' and the 'Establishment' Seek and find happiness in Sex and drugs and rock n' roll.

But what has it given us? The Sixties? A heritage of STD's and the need to learn about that uncomfortable and unsettling stuff in middle school, drugs have left to us with a whole other realm of addictions beyond the alcoholism of previous generations and rock n roll has produced, of course, some deafness but even its great prophet, Mr Jagger, couldn't get no satisfaction. The sixties successfully undid the past but left us empty. The Promise is unfulfilled.

The Christian religion, our Faith, is about our desires, about what we want. And it shows us a way, a path toward that happiness. St Michael's is about showing that path in action, an actual week of seeking that contentment and that peace.

St Mike's shows the importance of order and structure. We have to get up, we then go and pray, then we have breakfast, then there are classes - structure and order in our lives is essential if we are to have peace and happiness. There must be structure and order in our Christian lives. A Christian life means a life of structure and order.

St Mike's shows us another necessary element of Christian life - prayer. We have to pray, we have to engage our God regularly. WE bring ourselves as we are to Him in prayer, all our desires, our hopes, our doubts, our struggles, our fears - all has to come to the God who loves us.

But prayer is not a lonely activity, we do it here together and it is necessary to do it at home, in your home church on Sundays, with other Christians. This involves fellowship and friendship.

And while here we build, maintain and grow in our friendships in Christ we can do so too at home - and our friends at home do not have to be our own age – they can be 5 times our age, we might be 11 and they might be 55 years old.

Order in our days and weeks, structure in our prayer and worship, corporate, together with other Christians who worship – all this requires discipline. Discipline in our lives, discipline of our desires.

But our God who so loves us, will not leave us alone, will not abandon us simply to our own efforts to seek and love Him. He will walk with us, help us, give us encouragement through and in those others, of whatever age, who desire the same end and who walk along with us..

Let us leave this place, let us leave St Mike's determined to seek His presence, to desire His love and to draw closer to our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, blessed forever. Amen.