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A few weeks ago a parishioner came up after Mass and said,

Fr. Mike, you're losing weight again!

And it's true.

I made a New Year's resolution to get in shape.

I struggled the first few weeks of January

but then I got into a good routine.

But, I think it was the last word of the parishioner's comment that hit a nerve.

Fr. Mike, you're losing weight AGAIN!

Again, as in, *'We've seen this before.*

You lose, you gain, then lose then gain.'

Sadly, also true.

See, I know up here how to be healthy.

Where I've struggled is with the follow through.

Now, there's no secret to my recent success.

It's the basics I was first taught in high school.

My teacher in health class called them the ABC's of health:

A: **AVOID** bad things,

B: **BE** active (that means exercise) and

C: **CONSUME** the right foods.

ABC, simple, right?

Okay, I'm not telling you anything you don't already know.

But like with so many things in life, it's good to be reminded of the basics from time to time, whether we're talking about physical health, emotional health or spiritual health.

SCREEN: Faith 101 main screen

This is week two of our Easter message series titled, Faith 101.

We chose this title because the readings for the Easter season remind us of the basics—the ABC's—of our faith.

They provide a plan for following Christ.

Which is helpful no matter where you are on your spiritual journey.

If you're just setting out on the road of discipleship,

it can be overwhelming figuring out what to know and do.

Even if you've been a churchgoer for years,

it's helpful to be reminded of the basics from time to time.

So each week we're focusing on a lesson Christ taught his followers.

Last week we heard that we must be the healing hands of Jesus.

SCREEN: God feeds us at Mass with the Body and Blood of Jesus

This week we're reminded that the Eucharist is the most essential ingredient in a healthy spiritual diet. God feeds us at Mass with the Body and Blood of Jesus. Let's begin.

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The Gospel readings in the Easter season give us stories of Jesus appearing to his followers after he rose from the dead. The one we heard today is one of the more intriguing and powerful stories. So, let me set the scene.

The Apostles are at the Sea of Tiberias fishing. Now, that in itself has always intrigued me. Their master, Jesus, suffered, died, rose again and then appeared to them, not once, but twice. So they had no doubt that Jesus is the messiah, the Christ, the Son of God. What did they do with this knowledge? They went back to being fishermen! It strikes me as odd, every time I hear it. You think they'd be running from town to town announcing the Good News that Jesus had risen from the dead and was the messiah. Instead they went home and went back to fishing. Why? I think it's because fishing was what they knew. It had been their livelihood before they met Jesus. So it was easy and comfortable for them....and it was safe. When the Risen Jesus appeared to them on the seaside, I can almost imagine him calling out to them,

Guys, what are you doing here?

Remember when we first met here three years ago?

I called you and said come follow me, and you did.

You literally dropped your nets to become my followers.

No more fishing guys, it's time to become shepherds.

There's work to be done!

And before they left the seaside and left fishing for the last time, Jesus fed them a meal, said 'follow me' again, and they did. As in everything Jesus did and said, this was a teaching moment. He was instructing them in the basics, the ABC's, of discipleship. And this lesson was important for them to succeed. He was essentially saying to them,

As I have fed you, now you must go and spiritually feed others.

This was not just a lesson for the Apostles at the seaside,

it's a lesson for every disciple; for me and you.
As we are fed by Christ, we must feed others.
Every week Christ invites you to dine with him at Mass.
It's just like the invitation Jesus gave the Apostles in the Gospel today.
But the meal he offers isn't a breakfast of fish and bread
but his own body and blood in the Eucharist.
Every Mass ends with the dismissal to 'go forth'.
It's a command of what must happen after Mass.
After being nourished and fed here,
you are sent forth to go share Christ out there.
But you can't give what you don't have.
So if you're not here, or here only occasionally,
or only when it fits in your schedule,
what will you have to give others?
The news on any given day reminds us that
the world out there is hungry for Christ.
Hungry for hope and healing.
Your world...your family, friends, co workers, classmates and neighbors...
are hungry for God's love and God's message.
Christ wants you to feed those who are hungry and hurting and lost.
When Jesus told Peter to feed his sheep,
he was giving the mission of sharing Christ to all the members of the Church.
Committing to weekly worship is one essential way for you
to be strengthened for the mission you've been given.
Making the commitment to be here every week isn't easy.
It requires hard work, sacrifice and dedication.
For you to be here every week without fail might mean
changing up your weekend routine,
changing your schedule and reorganizing your priorities.
But it's the only way to succeed;
the only way for you to achieve and maintain spiritual health.
I've learned that for me to be physically healthy,
I need to make lots of small choices every week.
Choices like, getting out of bed to exercise rather than rolling over.
Eating this over that.
That's health 101.
It's achieved through lots of small choices every week.

SCREEN: Faith 101 main screen

The same is true for spiritual health.

Without a solid commitment to weekly worship
life can so easily get out of whack and imbalanced.
It can happen so gradually that you don't even notice it until a crisis or tragedy occurs.
Then you feel lost, unsure of what to do or where to turn.
But when worship is part of your week, every week,
you are fed and nourished by God's Word and Christ's Body & Blood.
You're strengthened for life's challenges and tribulations
and are able to share Christ with others who may be hungry and hurting.
If you find yourself struggling with a commitment to weekly worship,
begin by answering this question:
what other things in your life are you giving greater time or attention?
In other words, what are you filling your plate with?
Is it work, your kids' commitments,
family trips, vacations?
None of those are bad things.
They're good things, essential things.
But when it comes to spiritual health,
they're just not what's most important.
If you prioritize weekly worship in your schedule,
everything else in life will fall into place and make sense.
But skip it or show up only occasionally and you'll always feel unfulfilled.
You'll always be hungry for something else.
Only Christ can fill you...in a way nothing and no one else can.
And it is only when you are filled with Christ,
that you are able to share him with others.
Here is the takeaway for this series (hold up).
You can find these at the exits.
For each week of our Faith 101 series,
we give you a task to complete.
Think of it as your Faith 101 homework assignment.
And this week, your task is to
recommit to weekly worship.
Take some time to reflect on your attitude to worship.
Figure out what keeps you from being here each week.
Pray about what needs to change with your schedule, your routine or your priorities so you
can recommit.
If you are a weekly worshipper, try adding a daily Mass once a week.
Or try getting to Mass a little earlier.
Consider reading over the scriptures for Mass ahead of time.

They are so easy to find online.

In other words, change it up so you don't get stuck in a rut with worship.

I started off talking about the ABC's of good health I learned in high school.

They've stayed with me all these years.

SCREEN: ACKNOWLEDGE Christ present here

BE APPRECIATIVE of the gift of His Body & Blood

CHOOSE weekly worship

Here are the ABC's of today's message on spiritual health:

A: ACKNOWLEDGE Christ present here

B: BE APPRECIATIVE of the gift of his body & blood BY

C: CHOOSING weekly worship. Amen.