

SCREEN: Happy Mother's Day

ME: Well, again, happy Mother's Day

to all the moms of the parish!

I'll be celebrating with my mom.

I already mailed her card.

Now if you've ever gone card shopping,

you've probably run into a few people

who can take forever.

I have a friend like this.

She has to read every single card

before settling on the one that says

exactly what she wants to say.

Not me. Maybe it's 'a guy thing' but for

my mom's card I went into the store

---the dollar store---found a card that said

"To my mom", read it and decided,

that sounds good and I bought it.

Maybe 30 seconds tops!

I've never gotten any complaints so

I guess I'm doing something right.

Or maybe it's because most Mother's Day

cards express the same sentiment,

which is:

Mom, I know I don't tell you enough,

but thank you for being my mother!

Your love and your sacrifice has

made me who I am.

WE: Whether we are celebrating

Mother's Day, Father's Day,

or any special occasion, we know that

when love is given, it has to be returned.

Has to be....because it is so easy to

take the love of others for granted,

to not return the love.

If this happens it leads to hurt feelings,

ingratitude and even broken relationships.

But when love is returned,

the relationship thrives and grows and

is a source of blessing to others.

SCREEN: Living Stones main screen

Today we begin a new message series titled “Living Stones”.

Just like this graphic shows,

when we speak of ‘living stones’ we are referring to the members of the Church--- you and me.

The bible teaches us that every single disciple must be a living stone in order

for the Church to grow.

The bible also refers to the Church as
our spiritual mother.

So over this next month we will celebrate
her and all she does for us.

And we will talk about how we can
return her love.

Let's get started by jumping into

today's readings.

SCREEN: blank red background

GOD: If you were with us last week,

you might remember hearing how

Peter and the Apostles preached in

the streets of Jerusalem.

They told the crowd that Jesus was raised

from the dead and is the Son of God.

Their preaching was so successful

that 3000 people were baptized

and joined the Church in one day.

And the Church continued to grow.

So much so it became a real challenge

for the Apostles.

(I know lots of pastors who wish they

had that problem right now!)

But it was a problem for the Apostles.

They had to figure out how to bring everybody together and take care of their needs.

They realized they needed help.

So they met, prayed about it,

then chose seven individuals to help with

the day-to-day tasks so they could

focus entirely on making disciples.

And because the Apostles found a solution,

we heard this:

SCREEN: The word of God continued to

spread, and the number of the disciples

in Jerusalem increased greatly

So the Church kept growing---

the Word of God kept spreading---

because members of the Church

were willing to do their part.

Just think of what might have happened

had others not stepped up:

the Church would have become stagnant,

it would have shrunk,

and eventually would have died.

And we wouldn't be here now!

Those first disciples took to heart

St. Peter's words in the second reading

today when he said:

SCREEN: Come to him, a living stone,
rejected by human beings
but chosen and precious in the
sight of God, and, like living stones,
let yourselves be built into a
spiritual house.

“Let yourselves be built into a spiritual

house”--he’s talking about the Church.

But this is a house not built with bricks and mortar but with people, with disciples.

There is an unstoppable power that is created when all the members of the

Church come together and unite

behind one vision.

Jesus knew this.

It's why he could tell his followers,

*“whoever believes in me will do the works
that I do, AND WILL DO
GREATER ONES THAN THESE.”*

YOU: If you're like me, you might scratch
your head at this.

I can do greater works than Jesus did?

How?!?

Jesus healed the sick, he forgave sins,

he fed multitudes.

I can't do that! Can I? Can you?

Yes!

When all of us come together as one

Church we can do all these things.

We can feed the hungry and heal the sick

and forgive sinners.

We can welcome strangers and

make disciples and so much more.

But for this to happen, every single one of us has to live out our mission.

God needs you to be a living stone so

His Church can keep growing today.

And the part of the Church God wants you to help build is St. Pius X Church.

SCREEN: To form disciples who joyfully live out the mission of Jesus Christ in Bowie. *-SPX Church vision statement*

As a parish we have a vision of what is possible and here it is:

to form disciples who joyfully live out the mission of Jesus Christ in Bowie.

For this vision to continue and come to fulfillment we need you to step up,

just like the early Church needed people to step up and give.

When we talk about giving we use
the phrase: time, talent and treasure.

Time, talent and treasure:

three ways our members give.

For several years now we've talked a lot
about giving of time and talent by
serving in a ministry or volunteering
with a mission activity.

We haven't talked a lot about the

treasure part; giving financial support.

Without generous giving by our members,

we can't do the greater works Christ

wants us to do.

Without giving we will only be able to

maintain at our current level;

we won't grow.

Now I know that any time money is brought up in church some folks' eyes glaze over, others close their ears, some get turned off.

“Here they go, always talking about money!”

But the truth is we hardly talk about money.

Why is giving to God so important?

First of all, the Church teaches us that

everything you have comes from God.

Everything.

He is creator of all, created me and you

and everything around us.

Here is something else to consider:

one financial expert has calculated that the

Bible refers to money and possessions

2,350 times. 2,350 times! That's *a lot*.

It's more than Jesus talked about love,
and more than He talked about
heaven and hell combined.

Why so much?

God knows us really well.

He knows we need *lots* of direction and
clarity on our money and our giving.

The material and financial blessings of

your life are given to you by God

to use to build the Kingdom.

We refer to this as stewardship.

He gives them to you for a time,

but you take none of them with you

when you leave this earth.

When you die God will ask for a report,

an accounting of what you did with

all that he gave you.

I don't say that to put fear or guilt on you;

just to let you know this is what you and I

can expect when we make it to heaven.

So God has got to be in the equation

of any discussion about money.

Without God you will never see your

money and possessions in the right way.

Without God and what he says about

money, you can fall into the trap

so many have of looking to money to give

meaning and value to your life, and it can't.

You're never going to get life right and

become a true living stone in

God's Kingdom unless and until you

get the money part right.

And there is only one way to do that,
and that is to give. To give.

When you give as an act of worship and
give intentionally, you offer all you have
to God who promises to bless
the cheerful giver.

For the next few weeks, culminating on
Pentecost (which is June 3/4),

we will be preaching about how you and I
can become the 'living stones'

Christ calls us to be.

On Pentecost we will have our
annual offertory pledge renewal.

Every year in the Spring we ask our
members to pledge their financial support
to the parish.

Now even though we are considering an expansion plan for our facilities, the Pentecost renewal is entirely about your regular parish support.

In ten days you will receive a letter from me asking you to renew your support for the coming year.

With the letter you will receive a pledge

card to fill out and bring with you to Mass on Pentecost weekend.

Here's the takeaway for this series (hold up).

Be sure to get one as you leave today.

They are at the doors of the church.

This has some great tools to help you determine what your giving should look like.

Please read this and pray about how you can support our parish vision to make disciples in Bowie.

SCREEN: Living Stones main screen

WE: I started off talking about Mother's Day and how we need to return the love our moms give us.

Our spiritual mother the Church gives us

more love than we can ever return.

But with grateful hearts we can show our

love by returning to God

the blessings we have received.

We can truly become living stones in

Christ's Kingdom. Amen.