

**Homily for January 20, 2002
2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

By Father Charles Bowes

**Isaiah 49:3, 5-6
1 Corinthians 1:1-3
John 1:29-34**

Happiness belongs to us, and everyone.

Grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ, says Saint Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians chapter 1.

What can we learn from looking at the greeting of an ancient letter? Each word of scripture has been sifted to a fine grain by the reflection of twenty centuries, but can anything be gained by reading publicly the formal address between a long-dead preacher and his long-gone assembly? The echo that returns to us in such a proclamation is this: that the church of God in Corinth and the church of God in Our Lady of the Rosary parish have some wonderful things in common. Those who received this letter from Saint Paul heard that every one of them gathered in the room in Corinth was to be holy. There is no question: the letter does not single out, does not call the leaders or the especially good folks to holiness. It calls everyone then and now. The church of God whole and entire is sanctified. And that is no less true here, today, than it was there and then.

What does it mean that we here have been sanctified, and are called to holiness? It means that we are on the same par with other things we might think are worthy of the name holy: sanctuaries, churches, sacraments, altars, tabernacles. God dwells in us and operates through us – we are Christ to the world today, to the world we touch. Every day of our lives is an altar upon which we make our sacrifices and to which we send up our prayers to God. We tend to belittle the effect all of these sacraments are having on us, just because we can't see it. But we become the company we keep. As Saint Augustine put it so well: We become what we receive in Holy Communion, therefore, act that way.

And we are blessed this weekend to have folks who have had this reality of God's enfleshment in their lives become a new meaning – I'll invite Mrs. Klich, our Pastoral Associate, to introduce a parishioner.

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