

Here's The Point!

Life Lessons from Mother Lynn

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"God's New Math"

Originally delivered June 5-6, 2010 in honor of our Youth Group on the occasion of their high school graduation

Luke 9:10-17

Can anyone here help me out by telling me how much two plus two equals? I'm serious here... Someone help me out! Two plus two equals four! That's our human math.

$2 + 2 = 4$.

When my kids were in school, they had something called "new math." I didn't get into that because I had all I could do to learn the old math. However, today I want to talk about another kind of math – it's called God's New Math!

God's new math is totally different from human math – I know this first hand – you do too. Here's how God's new math works:

It only works when God is in control.

In God's new math – a little equals a lot.

In God's arithmetic, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

I don't claim to understand God's math, but I know it works because I've seen it in action right here in the local and global ministry of our magnificent graduating seniors.

But before I get to this amazing group of young adults – I want to begin where this new math began. I want to start with Jesus because His Risen Spirit gives us the tools for this new discipline.

Here's the gospel story: It's early in Jesus' preaching and healing ministry. Due to his increasingly high profile, King Herod has Jesus on his radar. Sensing danger - remember Herod has recently beheaded Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist - Jesus prudently withdraws to the little town of Bethsaida.

Crowds follow Him – 5,000 people to be exact. Jesus welcomes them, teaches about God's love and cures those in need of healing. It gets late – the disciples get hungry and start talking about supper. They suggest that Jesus send the crowd out in search of a first century deli.

Instead, Jesus commands: "You give them something to eat!" The incredulous disciples counter – "All we have is five loaves of bread and two fish."

Here's where the math gets shaky. There are five thousand people and the disciples have five loaves and two fish. That's a thousand people per loaf of bread and a whiff of fish per person! Improbable no matter how you do the math.

Here's how the new math began: Jesus took the loaves, looked up to heaven, gave thanks to God and broke the loaves. The good news is: when Jesus is in charge -- five thousand people ate to their hearts content - and had left- overs!

Here's the point: the feeding of the five thousand shows us that in God's economy five loaves and two fish add up to whatever's needed to get the job done. In God's new math, a little becomes a lot and the whole is definitely greater than the sum of the parts.

It gets better: this miracle isn't relegated to scripture – it's a present reality we experience here in our parish family.

We've seen the grace of God's new math in the amazing and incredible ministry of Claire Burns, Mikaela Cucullo, Mike Harris, Jamie Giglio, Jeremy Giglio, Kate Hogan, Samantha Nardozzi and Will Strong.

Later in the Mass, we're giving them gifts, clapping wildly - whistling if needed - and taking pictures – but we're not there yet! Also, we'll continue festivities during a party that follows the Mass.

Before I reference some of the beautiful work you've accomplished for Christ. It needs to be said that you had terrific leaders in Renee Brown, Carol Burns and Susan Harris.

They are retiring as Senior High Youth Group leaders, having gotten “stars in their heavenly crowns” after years of first rate leadership. So...if anyone feels called to continue their work – especially the Midnight Run - speak to one of them or me!

Now, some of your ministries:

- 1) You fed the homeless and hungry at St. Bartholomew's Sunday Soup Kitchen.
- 2) You participated in all our fund raisers in a myriad of ways – selling tickets, running the children's games... I still have the great bird house made by the Youth Group for one Spring Fest.
- 3) You lifted our hearts by your three-year presence at our Winter Ball – what a gift having you there with us!
- 4) You led us in the Carpenter's Kids program which provides uniforms and lunches so AIDS orphans in Tanzania can attend school.
- 5) You served Christ as ushers, acolytes, lay readers, church school teachers and baby sitters.
- 6) You inspired us by serving the poor in Appalachia through the Appalachian Service Project and by feeding and clothing the homeless and hungry in New York City through Midnight Run and Breakfast Run.

In all those ministries and more – through you and your witness - our little parish experienced a loaves and fishes explosion of clothing, food and everything necessary to nourish and nurture God's people in need.

Here's what you need to remember: don't stop!!

Continue the good work that God has begun in you here.

Continue to love and serve God and His people. When you do that the miracle of God's new math happens. Everything needed is always provided – in abundance!

Finally: remember that this will always be your home – visit us often!

Remember that you're precious in Jesus' sight - that you're ALWAYS loved, accepted and forgiven.

Pass that good news on to others!

Remember that WE love you!