



My Dear Parishioners,

Praised be Jesus Christ! For several years now, our parish has participated in a book give-away at Christmas. Inspired on a national level by Catholic Author Matthew Kelly, the book give-away comes from Kelly's conviction that books matter. For books contain ideas; ideas have power to change people; And good

books = good ideas/good change in the heads and hands of many people. Kelly's goal is to get as many good books into people's hands as possible.

Christianity, of course, is more than an idea or a book. It's an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. And it's that story of encounter which underlies Kelly's work. Several years ago, in his book Rediscovering Catholicism, Kelly said:

"I have spent hundreds of hours reflecting on where we are in our journey as a Church, and one thing that has become startlingly clear is that we have forgotten our story."

I think Kelly is right. In many ways, we have forgotten our story and even worse, for a whole new generation, the story of our faith has been left untold. And whenever this happens, we are in trouble. I close below with some of the story of Catholicism as told by Kelly. Now is the time for us to know the story and to do all we can to assure it's continuance in a world hostile to religion.

Peace,

Fr. Rogers

From Matthew Kelly's: Rediscovering Catholicism

There are 1.2 billion Catholics in the world. There are sixty-seven million Catholics in America — that's at least fifteen million more people than it takes to elect an American president. And every single day the Catholic Church feeds, houses, and clothes more people, takes care of more sick people, visits more prisoners, and educates more people than any other institution on the face of the earth could ever hope to.

Consider this question: When Jesus was alive, where were the sick people? Were they in hospitals? Of course not; there were no hospitals at the time of Christ. The sick were huddled at the side of the road and on the outskirts of town, and that is where Jesus cured them. They had been abandoned by family and friends who were afraid that they would also become sick.

The very essence of health care and caring for the sick emerged through the Church, through the religious orders, in direct response to the value and dignity that the Gospel assigns to each and every human life.

Allow me another question: How many people do you know who were born to nobility? Men and woman whose parents are kings, queens, dukes, earls, duchesses, knights, and so on? Not many, I suspect, and probably none. Well, that is the number of educated people you would know if the Catholic Church had not championed the cause to make education available to everyone. Prior to the Church's introduction of education for the common man, education was reserved only for the nobility. Almost the entire Western world is educated today because of the Church's pioneering role in universal education.

The global reach and contribution of the Church is enormous, but the national impact of the Church on every aspect of society is also impressive, though largely unknown. In the United States alone the Catholic Church educates 2.6 million students every day, at a cost of ten billion dollars a year to parents and parishes. If there were no Catholic schools these same students would have to be educated in public schools, which would cost eighteen billion dollars. The Catholic education system alone saves American taxpayers eighteen billion dollars a year.

In the field of secondary education the Church has more than 230 colleges and universities in the U.S., with an enrollment of seven hundred thousand students. And the Catholic and non-Catholic students educated in our schools and colleges go on to occupy many of the highest positions in any field. In terms of health care, the Catholic Church has a nonprofit hospital system comprising 637 hospitals, which treat one in five patients in the United States every day.