Compassion & Discipleship

are the themes of today's readings.

But before I talk about the readings,

I would like to draw attention

to the environment in our church today.

All of the Easter and Pentecost symbols

are put away and the color green is back.

We are now in Ordinary Liturgical Time.

That is what we now call this new Church Season.

My mentor, Virginia Smith, would tell me

there is nothing "ordinary" about this time.

This Ordinary Time means we are now called

to grow and mature in understanding Christ

and to bring the whole world to Christ.

Our new church environment reminds me

that there is so much more to being Church

than decorations and a building.

Church is about being a Kingdom of disciples…a Holy Nation…

just like we heard the Exodus reading today.

In today's Gospel Jesus is moved with pity

for a crowd that is troubled and a bit lost,

like sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus's promise is to always be present.

Life was not the best in Israel at the time of Jesus.

The Romans had conquered and occupied the land for many years

keeping the people poor and powerless.

Jesus also saw that the people were oppressed

by Pharisees & Sadducees.

The people of Israel saw the Law of Moses expand

to too many rules, more than 537 rules and laws,

to be strictly followed and there also was a temple tax.

Jesus was moved with pity for a spiritually troubled

and abandoned people.

So what did Jesus do?

If you paid attention to today's Gospel Reading…

the names of the Apostles were named in pairs.

First there was Simon and Andrew.

Then there was James and his brother, John.

Then Phillip and Bartholomew. James and Thaddeus.

Finally, James and Judas.

The pairing of the disciples implies that they were sent in pairs

to minister to all those living in the lands of Jewish influence.

They were sent in pairs because this provided each

with support & companionship.

Jesus gave power to the Apostles and disciples to cure the sick,

raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and drive out demons.

So what about today…2 thousand years

after Jesus was on this earth?

Do we have the same mission as the original apostles?

I would say YES!

All of us can find courage & strength

to minister in the name of Jesus.

Mothers & fathers can minister to their children.

Brothers & sisters can minister together.

Workers can minister to other workers.

Are there miracles today like we read in Scripture?

I would say Yes.

Talk to doctors & nurses that can't explain cured patients.

Talk to drug and alcohol counselors

that help people with their demons of addictions.

Talk to the scientist

who seeks to control a mysterious and wonderful world.

Talk to the environmentalist

who desperately tries to cool the atmosphere.

Talk to our priest, Father Martin,

that has witnessed people, dead from sin,

be saved through Reconciliation.

In the Sacrament of Confession,
the Holy Spirit brings us back to good works
through the Grace of God.
Can we do good works?
I would say Yes.

Our 1st Reading from Exodus explains in one line…
"Therefore, if you hearken to my voice and keep my Covenant
you shall be my special possession,
dearer to me than all other people."
We are to answer the call to be laborers of the harvest…
which means harvesting souls…
by going forward and spreading the `Good News of the Gospel'.

I especially would like to encourage the men celebrating Father's Day
to reflect on your obligation to minister to your family.
I rejoice that lately you have put in the effort to bring your children
closer to God.
Fathers, hopefully you look to Jesus' father on Earth……St. Joseph.
He protected his family from Herod
and provided a nurturing spiritual home.
So to conclude…I pray for all father's today

with the Prayer to St. Joseph.

Fathers, please pray with me.

Oh, St. Joseph, whose protection is so great, so prompt, so strong,
before the throne of God, I place in you all my interests and desires.

Oh, St. Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession,
and obtain for me from your Divine Son
all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
So that, having engaged here below your heavenly power,
I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of fathers.

Oh, St. Joseph, I never weary contemplating
you and Jesus asleep in your arms;
I dare not approach while he reposes near your heart.
Press him in my name and kiss his fine head for me
and ask him to return the kiss when I draw my dying breath.

St. Joseph, patron of departing souls - pray for me.

Amen.

May all you fathers have a wonderful Father's Day.