

## Father Dave's Homily

09/09/12 ..... 23 B

-- In the past 10 days or so, the conventions for the two main political parties in our country have been held. And in both of them, we've heard endless appeals to support the middle class. Each party says they are looking out for the interests of the middle class.

-- The community addressed in the letter of James seems to have been a group of people who fell into what would have been the first century equivalent of the middle class. Most were neither extremely rich nor desperately poor.

-- But they seemed to be courting the favor of those who were better off. James points out how they treat the rich and the well-dressed quite differently from the poor who have to wear torn and tattered clothing.

-- Perhaps they thought they would get bigger contributions from the rich people if they gave them the red carpet treatment, so to speak. Some of them may have been seeking personal favors from the rich.

-- The possibilities are numerous. In any case, they did seem to treat the rich differently from the poor among them. And the rich clearly received better treatment. Sound familiar?

-- In the past couple of weeks, both political parties held exclusive and lavish parties. often with noted entertainers, for their big donors and supporters. Most of those people avoid the press when they attend these private gigs.

-- Dioceses and individual parishes face our own challenges in how we treat people of differing means. I'm not one to look regularly at individual parishioners' contribution records. But when we began our fund drive for our Church renovation at St. Joe in Fremont, we did have special meetings upfront for potential large donors. They weren't necessarily extravagant, but they were nice.

-- Yet the most touching note I received during that campaign came from an older man on a fixed income. When he gave his pledge, he

thanked me for this effort, saying he wished it could be more (decent amount) and asking God's blessings for our parish.

-- As communities which profess faith in Jesus, we are challenged to value all of our members. Our ministries, our allocation of time and talent and, yes, our budgets should attempt to reflect that commitment.

-- And we are challenged to bring people together from all age groups, backgrounds, rich, poor and middle class alike. We need to get to know each other's concerns and challenges.

-- Our parish day of work on a Habitat for Humanity home in Delta is a good way of making such an effort. That Saturday will occur at the end of this month, and there's more information about it in the bulletin.

-- And our parish festival three weeks from now offers an opportunity for all parishioners to work together in a common effort.

-- In the authentic Christian community, there is not the 99% and the 1%. We must be the 100%. Of course, we contribute to our efforts according to our means, in terms of time, talent and treasure. And we need to be concerned about the least among us.

-- But we don't make distinctions. What we share in our faith is much more important than the differences among us, whether they be ethnic, economic or political.

-- For, as the letter of James reminds us, we are all heirs to the kingdom that God promised to those who love him.