

METANOIA
By Fr. Tim Seigel

It's time to leave your house
and this shattered land you love;
to move away
from what has always been,
to a land you do not know;
a place you've never seen
landscaped with foreign trees
whose leaves you cannot read,
whose winds are songs never heard,
and whose bread is bitter to taste.

It's time, child to leave
your knee-scabbed yard
to walk fully grown
to a place you shall call home.

Dear Friends,

The final characteristic of an evangelizing parish says that **“An Evangelizing Parish provides ongoing opportunities that foster personal conversion of heart.”** Another term for conversion of heart comes from the Greek word “Metanoia” which means a complete turning around. We find ourselves moving in one direction in life, only to suddenly discover that we need to be moving in a different direction. Our journey into the Kingdom of God often has unseen detours and twists that leave us feeling confused about our faith. These moments might sometimes feel quite painful at first, but they are usually the most exciting and beautiful times of our lives. Conversion of heart is a turning toward God. Metanoia is an openness to God's grace at work in our lives, that enables us to realize that there is some spiritual hunger, a need that can no

longer go unfulfilled. It could be anything from a new experience of prayer to a more profound way to live our faith. Let's face it, if we are convinced that what we're already doing is just fine, and there is absolutely no room for growth in our faith lives, then there is obviously no reason to change because we're already as fully in God's kingdom as we can expect to be in this moment of time.

The truth of the matter is that there is always room for growth, and the mission of our parish is all about enabling people to grow in faith. We are working on some ways to help people in this regard. During Lent we will have a series of classes called CATHOLICISM 101. On Thursday evenings, all parishioners will be invited to come to Mass at 5:30 p.m. There will be a light supper after that, followed by a class that can help us come to a deeper understanding of where God wants us to be in our journey.

We're also working on some type of a daylong retreat here in the parish. This might be as simple as a couple of short talks followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, quiet reflection, reconciliation and Mass. The Pastoral Council and Liturgy Commission will be working with me to develop a spiritual day of renewal that can be done right here at the parish. It probably won't cost very much outside of the time commitment. But I believe something

simple might spark a beautiful moment of metanoia in the lives of our parishioners. We need the grace of the Holy Spirit to help us with this one.

To experience a conversion of heart is to know what it is like to die to ourselves and to rise with Christ to a new life. This kind of moment can happen in the simplest of ways, and still have the most beautifully profound impact on our lives. This is what evangelization is all about.

In joyful hope,
Fr. Tim Seigel