



## “FROM THE DESK OF FATHER JONATHAN”



FEBRUARY 14, 2016

Someone asked me this Ash Wednesday if I am bothered by the fact that so many people come to church for "ashes" but don't come as frequently for the Eucharist. The answer I gave was "No, not bothered at all; I'm inspired by their persistent faith."

That said, the fact that they aren't all coming to mass regularly, where the Lord is truly present in the Eucharist, is a reminder of how many people of faith are in need of our outreach to give them convincing reasons why to come to mass on Sundays. I see it as my fault--our fault--more than it is their fault. There are usually deeply personal issues why people stop coming to church, or never have come in the first place. Of course, sometimes it is simply laziness that keeps us away, but most of the times there is something more.

And even if laziness is part of the reason, we need to reach out to all of our neighbors and offer strong enough spiritual and human motivation to them so that they might go beyond whatever obstacle keeps them from coming to the Lord's house.

On this Ash Wednesday I walked the neighborhood with ashes and met so many wonderful people who were not planning on coming to mass. For those whose schedules permitted, I encouraged them to come to mass. For those who could not, I gave them ashes and prayed for them to take a step of courage and faith and come back home to our parish.

Are you inviting people back? Are you asking the sick or homebound in your building if they would like someone from the church to bring them the Eucharist? There is still a lot of faith in our neighborhood. Let's water it and feed it with love and mercy.

**Father Jonathan**

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