



## **INTERPRETING** the signs of our times: through the Lens of Sacred Scripture **The Fourth Step on our Discernment Journey**

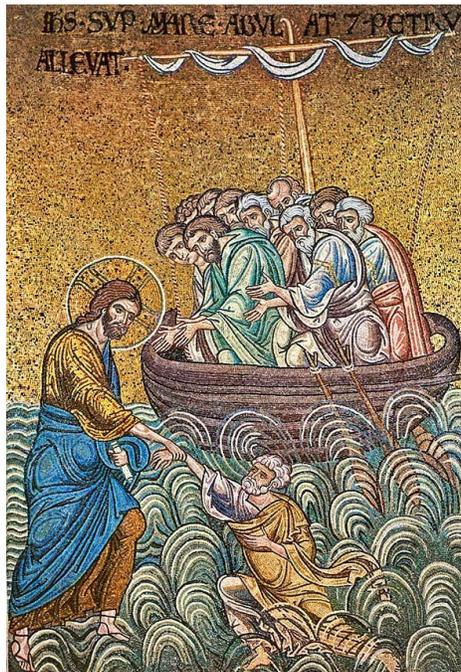
On November 7th our parish Leadership Community met to continue its work of communal discernment in order to better understand God's call for our parish. In this step of the process our Leadership Community focused on interpreting the signs of our times through the lens of Sacred Scripture.

They identified the signs of our times by prayerfully reflecting on over 70 interviews and on-line questionnaires from parishioners describing their concerns for themselves, our Naperville/Lisle Community, our nation and the world. They found that our parishioners had a deep concern about the growing political and social polarization in our community, our nation and in the world. Social unrest, racism, exclusion and various forms of domination were increasing people's feelings of isolation and were fueling a rise in unhealthy forms of individualism. There was also a growing anxiety about the future of their families; especially regarding their financial stability; their health and access to health care; and the strength and stability of their family's faith life.

Interpreting these concerns in light of Sacred Scripture our Leadership Community focused on two similar Gospel stories; Jesus Calms the Storm (Mark 4:25-41) and Jesus Calls Peter to Walk on the Water (Matthew 14: 22-23). As our Youth Representative Sam Schroeder, stated, "Jesus says to the disciples, 'You of little faith, why are you so afraid?' And he proceeds to calm to storm and amaze the twelve men. Our storm is now not a barrage of thunder and lightning, but of divisiveness and hate. Through this we can all turn to the Lord as a symbol of strength, because as the disciples witnessed first-hand, even the natural forces of Earth obeyed him."

At the same time, our Leadership Community found that our parishioners find hope in the actions of individuals and communities who reach out beyond their

own in order to help those in need. They are encouraged by young people who are eager to make a difference in the world by serving others. Our parishioners see God at work in communities of inclusion, collaboration, cooperation and kindness, and they are inspired by the witness of Pope Francis.



In this regard our Leadership Community was drawn to biblical teachings about the importance of loving others; the Greatest Commandment (Matthew 22:34-40) and the New Commandment (John 13:34-35). As Christian Service Commission Representative Carrie Tilton stated, "Our parish finds hope in this world through seeing/doing service to those in need."

The final step of the Leadership Community's discernment process will take place on Saturday, February 3rd where they will decide if we should keep our current parish theme and calling; adjust our current theme and calling; or articulate a new parish theme and calling for the next three years.

**Members of the Leadership Community will be meeting with parishioners after all Masses on Sunday, December 10th to discuss their discernment work. Fr. Paul and the entire Leadership Community ask all of us to continue praying for them as they seek to better understand God's call for our parish.**

**All of the reports and study documents for this year of discernment are available on our parish webpage at [www.smmp.com/info/discerning\\_parish\\_calling.php](http://www.smmp.com/info/discerning_parish_calling.php)**