

## **Ordinary 5.CMA In-Pew 2.9.25**

Several years ago, there was a popular sitcom on TV which featured a husband and wife. The husband's brother administered an IQ test to the couple as part of a course he was taking. He later reported that his sister-in-law had a higher IQ than her husband. The sister-in-law was delighted with the result. Her husband was crestfallen. The rest of the episode showed how the husband devolved into childlike behaviors and speech. When his wife called him out for all the things he stopped doing he replied, "I just can't help it. I'm dumb."

Our inadequacies, whether real or imagined, often are the excuse we use for not doing something. In each of the readings today, the prophet Isaiah, St. Paul, and St. Peter speak about how inadequate they are before God. Each could say how they were the wrong guy for the job because they were sinful, inarticulate, or had a questionable background. But God puts a halt to any thoughts they might have for not acting and using their inadequacies as their excuse.

All of us are inadequate. All of us are less than holy. All of us don't feel up to the task for one reason or another. That's why before we receive the Eucharist we proclaim, "Lord, I am not worthy...but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."

In the eyes of God, being inadequate is never an acceptable excuse for not living out our faith. God often does his best for us when we allow him to work in and through our deficiencies and inadequacies.

This weekend, Fr. Zach and I are speaking about the diocesan Catholic Ministry Appeal or CMA at all the Masses. Your contributions to this appeal pay for the education of our seminarians. Your gift supports efforts to find housing for those living on the streets. Your sacrifice to the CMA provides opportunities to better educate and form our children, teens, and adults in the ways and knowledge of the faith.

All too often, we demure from giving to this appeal. Perhaps our excuse is that we can't give a large amount of money. Or maybe we say, "I'm on a fixed income." Or we might rationalize that "I'm not sure where that money goes." My response to those excuses is: "no gift is too small or too big." Second, "my income is fixed too, but I give." And "your contribution to this appeal goes directly to the many ministries of the diocese. It doesn't go to overhead or the administration of these programs." We can make excuses, if we want. But that doesn't excuse us from assisting our sisters and brothers in need.

Tomorrow/today 75% of Americans will be watching the Superbowl. That's almost 260 million people. Most families are reporting that they'll spend less on food and party supplies this year as opposed to last year because groceries and other items are STILL so expensive. Despite those statistics, it is also reported that 4 out of 10 of those watching the Superbowl will bet on the game. That's 104 million people – about one-third of the population of the US. And \$1.4 billion will be legally wagered. Legal and illegal bets will total tens of billions of dollars. The average bet is \$100. The largest bet reported so far is \$800,000. 51% of men will bet. 56% of millennials will bet. 59% of parents with young children will bet. And 66% of Gen-Zers will bet on the Superbowl this year.

While we instinctively know that betting sites exist and thrive, not to give money away because they take in more money than they pay out, we take our chances at betting anyway.

Do you want a sure bet? It isn't about the point spread. It isn't about how many yards Patrick Mahomes will pass for. It isn't about if Saquon Barkley will score the first touchdown. A sure bet is taking care of our sisters and brothers. In God's eyes, that bet always pays out.

To those who have already given to the Catholic Ministry Appeal, I say thank you on behalf of Bishop Parkes. To those who haven't given yet, let's take a moment to fill out our pledge or contribution envelopes right now. Ushers will collect them in just a few minutes. After we say the Creed and offer our Prayer of the Faithful, we will take up the regular Offertory Collection.