

The Gospel and Mathematics

Following in Father Xavier's footsteps, I thought that I would offer a little joke to start my reflection. *A boy was always getting low grades in math and his parents were getting worried. After 3 tests with continuous F's, they decided to send him to a Catholic school due to the high success rate in math.*

After the boy's first day of school there, he got home and ran straight to his room without saying anything. After a couple of hours, his parents went up to check on him only to see him in his room doing math revision. They were confused but happy.

This went on every day for the rest of the year and at the end, the boy proudly held up his grade of an A+ in math.

His parents asked him what changed his mind about math. The boy said: "on my first day of school, when I walked into the math class, there was a guy nailed to a plus sign. That's when I knew they meant business."

In this weekend's Gospel, we hear how Jesus sent out his disciples two by two to spread the Gospel message. Was this an early math lesson for his disciples or did the number 2 mean something in a deeper message?

For many of us, the gold standard of learning math may be the old saying, what is $2 + 2$. That seems to be a starting point when we ask someone a simple math question. Today we hear that Jesus sent out his apostles two by two to proclaim the gospel and provide for healing as well.

Why did Jesus feel that it was important to send them out in pairs? He may have sent them out in pairs for a number of reasons including:

- **United labor:** Two people can work together to spread the truth
- **Encouragement:** One person can encourage the other
- **Correction:** Two people can correct each other's speech and attitude
- **Broader light:** Two people can see different aspects of the truth

In this context, it makes so much sense why Jesus wanted to send them out in pairs.

As we know, God has chosen all of us to go out and proclaim the Gospel to the world. For many of us, that may be a little overwhelming because we may not know where to start.

Let me suggest to you to fulfill the math that Jesus started with his disciples. How many of you have a friend that you can share your faith with? How about your spouse? Isn't it

interesting that right from the beginning, God said that it was not good for man to be alone. so he made him a partner. There were two.

There is great power in sharing your faith with others as a married couple. Leigh Ann and I often are asked to share our marriage journey in teaching at Pre Cana marriage prep courses in the Diocese of LaCrosse and we share how we journey together. We also tell the couples how we need to hold each other accountable for our lives of faith as well. It has such a greater meaning when we share the faith together.

But some of us may not be married or may be widowed and yet God is still calling us to join together and preach the gospel. Have you ever thought about joining together with another friend to talk about your faith? To talk about what strengths each of you have and then make a commitment to go out and preach the gospel? Or just help another person in walking with them in their faith.

The number 2 is powerful and that is the mission of accompaniment in the Diocese plan for evangelization is accompaniment.

So back to math, 1×2 is what? So that means that if each of you (say there is around 200 people today) would ask one person to accompany you and invite them to come with you to Mass, how many people would be at Mass next week? Yes 400 we would double in size if each of you would just bring one.

Now a complicated one, what it meant in math when we put a small two just on the upper right of a number (We square the number) so that means if we thought in just a few bigger terms, we could really build up this church in numbers. Example 4^2 equals 16.

The number two is so powerful and Jesus shares that with us today. Are we ready to take on the challenge of getting together with another person to build the church and preach the Gospel? I encourage you to pray this week and ask God to discern who he is calling you to work with. It is amazing how the simple math of the number 2 in the Gospel today, can help to spread the Gospel and change our world.

God Blessings—Deacon Jim