

**Homily**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday OT - A**  
Rev. Peter G. Jankowski  
January 14-15, 2023

Is 49: 3, 5-6  
Ps 40: 2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10  
1 Cor 1: 1-3  
Jn 1: 29-34

**Border Town  
Parishes**

Way to create a community and culture unlike any other! Cheers to doing it your way this year – now celebrate #MyYearOnYouTube.

**Your 2022 snapshot**

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**14.4K**

Total views

**186.8K**

Watch time minutes



Last month, the *YouTube* corporation sent me what is called a “2022

Snapshot,” telling me how many folks

had been watching our online videos

that we have produced for your benefit.

I was told how many hours and

minutes were spent investing in the

online ministry that we have offered

through these masses, missions and

retreats that we have produced online. After looking at that report, I was

amazed as to how many souls have been affected by what we have been

providing in God’s name.



According to the “YouTube Snapshot” from January-November of 2022, viewers made over 14,400 “hits” or views from the videos that we offered, resulting in 186,800 minutes of viewing and “153 likes” on the videos that we have offered. Some forty-two souls have become new subscribers to our *Border Town YouTube Channel* and I guess the number keeps growing. Add the 26,500 minutes that were watched in December 2002 and this leaves us with 213,300 minutes (or 3,555 hours) of viewing our online productions for the salvation of souls!

This being said, I realize that the parishes I serve are not very large nor are we on anyone’s radar in the world of faith. We are certainly not producing the numbers that the Bishop’s office or the Vatican accrue during the year, larger organizations that offer millions of hours of viewers that the faithful watch with their Masses and online offerings.

However, 186,000 minutes have been invested by the people who want God to reach their hearts during the first eleven months of 2022. That is a blessing to me because what we are trying to do is reach out to people to say that we care for them in God’s name. We realize that the

ministry that we are offering is not going to affect many because there are many in the world who have just lost their faith in God and lost their faith in investing in our parish life. Many have lost their way because they do not invest in a relationship with God, which is the whole purpose of why we exist on earth. Like any relationship, the more we invest with the people that we love, the more we show we care. Then when we come to the end of life and we stand before God, he asks us the two basic questions on which we focus every week... Do we love our God? Do we love our neighbor? Obviously, the answer to those questions depends on the way we invest ourselves in any given relationship we have, especially the one with the divine.

We also know Pew Research Center has told us that scores of people have left the church because of the sex abuse crisis among leaders in the Church, because the malaise of faith that exists in the Gen X and millennial generations and because of the Church's position on social justice issues that do not resonate with a society that has evolved away from an honest relationship with God who tries to direct us. Our society

has moved in one direction and the Church should remained focused on upholding the dogma and teachings of the Church. As we must teach like a good parent, the dogmas and major teachings of the faith do not change, regardless of what any specific individual or society wants.

On the last day, there is only one demographic that counts, and that one demographic is the one that will allow us to get to heaven based on the way we conduct ourselves. Whether we tell God we care or not determines whether we get to heaven or not. All of this is dependent on how faithful we are to the gospel message, which is the focus of Matthew's gospel, the gospel of this liturgical year that offers us a type of "textbook" on how to live that faith.

That said, we know that the world wants to move in a certain direction, which was and is made very clear in our scripture reading from the book of Isaiah. The word "Isaiah" literally means, "the Lord is salvation;" the Lord is my strength. Isaiah was told by the Lord that his own ministry was going to fail and that the people to whom he ministered would turn away from his teachings. Yet, Isaiah was still

called to answer that call from God and preach that message to the ends of the earth because that was God's calling to him as well as to us in today's age. This is the focus of today's gospel reading from the Gospel of John. Before we dive into the instructions given to us according to Matthew's gospel, these first two weeks we focus on the gospel of John.

For me, a great deal of what I believe rests on the 18<sup>th</sup> Chapter of St. John's Gospel, where Jesus states to Pilate the following lament of his own ministry some two thousand years ago...

"My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants [would] be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here." (Jn 18: 36)

"Mi Reino no es de este mundo. Si mi Reino fuera de este mundo, mis servidores habrían luchado para que no cayera yo en manos de los judíos. Pero mi Reino no es de aquí".

Even though Jesus became incarnate so that those who believe in him might have eternal life (3: 16), in reality, this world was not God's world. As we very well know, this world has chosen to move another direction, which is very evident in today's age with our government,

with our world politics, with what people want, as opposed to what God is telling us to do. (Just to be clear, obviously Jesus is not talking about necessarily the Jewish population who placed him on the cross; he was referring to the mob that was incited to nail him to the cross, a group that was not just Jew or Gentile but pretty much represented the whole of society.

I keep reflecting in my ministry about whether any of us would be strong enough to stand under that cross at the crucifixion and what price would be paid for defending our Lord at that moment. Our ministry mandates us to preaching Christ crucified, to keeping guard at the foot of that cross and to keep preaching the gospel message that St. Paul implores us to preach in his letter to the Corinthians.

St. Paul, who at one point of his life dedicated himself to killing Christians before his conversion, changed his ways to sacrifice his own life for the gospel message rather than condemning the others who did. St. Paul preached to the Corinthians to change their ways, yet noticed that in his absence, even in the first century, the people of Corinth

eventually turned away from God and began doing things at the liturgy that were un-Christian and exceedingly sinful. For that reason, Paul had to write those letters to so-called faithful in Corinth and chided them for living un-Christian lives at that liturgy.

As we begin this Season of Ordinary Time, we, too, must realize that we often fall into the same trap that Paul warned us to avoid two thousand years ago. Society's ways today have corrupted us today as they did back then. If we understand this lesson of our sinful behavior, we realize why we need to keep coming every week to listen to God's word, to understand what God wants and then to follow God's direction so that we do not revert to the ways of sin.

3,555 hours (or 213,300 minutes) this last year have been invested by the Border Town faithful watching our online Masses and services for 2022 (out have been invested in watching these masses to try to learn about God). Whether this online ministry is successful or not, that is up to God to decide. What we have tried to offer online and in Church is to instill and condition people to follow the ways that will get them to

heaven. The first basic lesson we teach in this season of Ordinary Time is that of the 168 hours that make up a week, we have asked you to invest 120 minutes or two hours of that 168 to pray to God – one hour at Mass and one hour for the sake of your spiritual health. Do each of us even do that? Do we take 15 minutes a day to pick up our rosary, to pray for the sick, to pray for the dead, to pray for each other, to pray for our local communities?

Obviously, there are a good number of people that have been watching these masses and understand what we are doing. I have tried to give out rosaries to people in our community, those olive wood rosaries that we got from the holy land; we have been distributing those rosaries out left and right and people have been taking them like candy. The Poor Clare nuns have been making rosaries that we keep distributing, hoping that the faithful invest in that 120 minutes a week. Please know we will continue to do what we can to produce these online Masses and we will continue offer you in-Church services because you are all worth it. You are a blessing and you are a treasure. We will do



what we can to take care of you in God's name because this is what God has called us to do as ministers of this Word and Sacrament.

Please continue to pray for us to pray for each other, to invest in this faith, to understand the world that we truly wish to spend with - 120 minutes a week, two hours a week to invest in prayer for the sake of others and certainly for our own spiritual health. If we do this, hopefully we will be re-conditioned in a way that the world does not wish you to live, a way that St. Paul implores us to live in his letter to the Colossians when he preaches, "may the word of God be enriched in our hearts so that whatever we do in Word or indeed we do, in the name of the Lord" (Col 3: 17). May God bless you during this season of Ordinary Time.

This is our prayer.