

Is Jesus a Home Wrecker? Jesus has some strange ideas about family. Why Jesus... Why were you so cool toward family?

Mark's Gospel this morning ends with this:

“Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.” 33 And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” 34 And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

I think Jesus did love his mother and brothers and sisters, but..he had a Father...and such a father! the Lord God himself, Yahweh! And he was on a mission for his father! This Father had reached right into the world. He had sent Jesus to be Emmanuel, God with us. Jesus was sent out of God's urgent love for us, to show us God's nature is love. Jesus taught us to pray to our father or Daddy.

So Jesus moved out beyond his immediate family. He ate with unsavoury outcasts and sinners! The authorities complained more than once. He made people feel better, healing their diseases mental and physical. He told them stories about the value of even one lost thing...the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son. He would in the end offer up his own life in love.

He would send out his new brothers and sisters, his followers, ‘into all the world’ to baptize all to new life to be born again into a new spiritual family.

Down through the years, Baptism, remains as our rite of initiation into the family of Christ...the washing away of all previous blots, new birth into the family of Christ...that is what our Lord Jesus is all about, making us part of the new family. So we gather as parish families...spiritual families around the table for a family meal, the bread and the wine and we are aware that we are taking in the body and the blood of our Lord. We care for one another...mothered and fathered by our priests and mothering and fathering one another as we go along.

We see that here at St James. We send cards today to our sick and we say 'from your Parish Family'.

As Lord did, we are called to draw the family circle wide...to reach beyond not only our nuclear families, but beyond our parish families. We do this when we give out free breakfasts each month at St George's, when we take with us free socks, and hoodies. We fill shoeboxes for Samaritans Purse at Christmas, we collect gifts for Salvation Army family outreach, we donate to the mobile health clinic in the Diocese of Ho. We recognize we are part of a larger family, a world wide family.

We join in the bigger family...we draw the circle wide.

Here is an example of drawing the circle wide.

Kindred Spirits is a beautiful stainless steel outdoor sculpture built by the Irish people in their own country to honor the American Choctaw Indian tribe. The Irish were grateful because in 1847 the Choctaw people sent money to Ireland when they learned that Irish people were

starving due to the potato famine. The Choctaw themselves were living in hardship and poverty, having recently endured the Trail of Tears, forcibly removed from their ancestral homelands.

But the Choctaw felt the suffering of the Irish and reached out.

The sculpture is in Bailick Park in Midleton, County Cork, Ireland. The shape of the feathers is intended to represent a bowl of food. Commissioned in 2015

<https://youtu.be/PcIQrWOYug8> Draw the circle wide

We will end by watching and listening to ‘Draw the Circle Wide’ written by Gordon Light a Canadian Anglican retired priest and bishop. The words are simple...draw the circle wide, no one stands alone...perhaps we can take this time to reflect on the meaning of family. The family to which we all belong, an immense family.

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, by your grace bring us into your big family.

Help us to feel part of the family. Help us to see all people as brothers and sisters in your family. In the name of one who was crucified for hanging out with people like us, we pray. Amen.