

Once when I was a young boy,
Our family went on a vacation to Chicago.
As part of the trip I remember going out on a boat on Lake Michigan,
Having never been to the ocean,
It was by far the biggest piece of water I had ever seen.
At one point on the boat, something was tossed in the water that made a ripple,
And I distinctly remember wondering if that ripple would reach
all the way to the shore.

Most of us I imagine have had the experience as young kids of being mesmerized
by the ripples created by a rock tossed in a pool or a pond or a lake.
It starts at the center and slowly you see it working it's way out.

Today's Gospel contains these words:
Many Samaritans came to believe in him
because of the word of the women who testified,
"He told me everything about myself."

That one line made me realize
that Jesus really relied on the ripple effect to spread his message.
Only once or twice in the gospels do we have Jesus preaching to a large crowd.
Most of the encounters with Jesus are closer to one on one.
He'd toss his love over here and allow that person to spread the good news.
He'd offer healing to one person here and this person would go off and
proclaim their encounter with Jesus.
And maybe there were times when he wondered
if this ripple effect was really going to work.

Like a child tossing a rock in a lake
and wondering if the ripples would ever reach the shore
I'm sure Jesus wondered if his message would spread beyond
the small confines of Nazareth and Jerusalem.
But it did work; his message did spread beyond Galilee.

And you know what; the ripple effect works just as well today.
You've probably experienced it yourself:
One person gets excited about something and soon that excitement grows.

And we see it happen here at JP II...

Ask Joel or someone in any of our choirs
to talk about the music here at St. John Paul II
And you'll hear the excitement in their voice.

Talk to Krisitna Seipel or Lynell Chapberlain or Dolores Snyder
about the Adult Education opportunities here
and you'll know how strongly they believe in life-long education for Catholics.

Ask Karen Haas or Chris Rosio or Mike Winebrenner
to talk about St. John Paul II School and you'll hear in her voice the
Love they have for Catholic Education and for our kids here.

These are examples of the ripple effect in action. And there are more....

If you want to see the ripple effect in action,
ask Keith Alexander to explain why he's involved in the Capital Campaign
and he'll talk to you for a long time about his vision—
a vision not just for a building but a vision for a Church—for our parish.

Ask Josh Martin to talk about our sporting programs,
Or Wayne and Debbie Rieger about our outreach programs,
Or Phyllis Burkholder about our pro-life programs;
Ask just about anyone who does adoration and
I think they'll tell you quite a bit about how it has helped them in their life.

My friends, Jesus used the ripple effect 2,000 years ago and it worked.
And even with all the technologies of this age;
Even with all the advertising opportunities on television, and radio,
newspapers and magazines, billboards and yard signs...
Most people in public relations and advertising will tell you
nothing beats good, old-fashioned word of mouth.
Nothing is better than the ripple effect.

A few years ago, Major League Baseball had a slogan:
Baseball Fever—catch it.

Talk to the people active here at St. John Paul II
and you'll very quickly diagnose them with JP II Fever...

Go one step farther and get involved,
And you just might catch it yourself.