

Unless You Show It

I was reading an article about a town's remodeling project. On their Main Street they demolished a church built in the 1930's. Although the windows of the empty church had been removed, the doors remained in place. Each set of doors around the church building held a message written in giant, fluorescent orange block letters; **KEEP OUT!**

As I was reflecting on this article, I wondered, unfortunately, some churches whose doors are open may send the same message to visitors whose appearance may not measure up to their standards. No fluorescent, giant size letters needed. With a single disapproving stare, some people may communicate: "You're not welcome here!" I don't think it's happening here in our parishes; however, it's something to think about. What message am I sending to the people around me in the church I attend?

How people look on the outside, of course, is not an indicator of what is in their hearts. God's focus is on the inner life of people. As it says in the gospel of Matthew, "God knows the hearts of those who appear to be *righteous*; but are *full of hypocrisy* on the inside."

God's message of welcome is clear. "Come to me all you who are burdened, my yoke is easy, my burden light." No one will know what you mean when you say, "Come on in, your welcome"; unless you show it. Pray that Jesus will show us how to be as accepting of others as He is.

Together through prayer and service,

Deacon Mike