



**TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**September 15, 2024**

## *St. James Catholic Church*

*3909 Harrison \* Kansas City, Missouri 64110*

*"Small enough to know your name, big enough to make a difference."*

### *Reflection from Jill Clements*

Sometimes it's confusing combing through the "messiness" of faith especially when we have "leaders" that have contradictory definitions of truth. Two weeks ago during the homily, I really appreciated Fr. Garry's analogy of the hand pointing to the moon in religious art. He mentioned that oftentimes people focus too much on the details of the hand (gender, race, religion, etc), when we really should be focusing on the moon (God). I jokingly whispered to my husband, "That's not what that other priest said a few weeks ago." The St. James community welcomes all "hands" in such a beautiful way to lead them to the "moon".

We have had a similar contradictory situation in the gospel for the past two Sundays. Jesus tells His disciples today in Mark 8 to not tell anyone about Him, yet just a few chapters earlier (Mark 5), he told the man who had been possessed by demons to tell everyone . Why would this be? Why does Jesus tell some to tell everyone about Him and others to be silent? Maybe Jesus knew that the disciples at that moment still didn't "get it". By commanding them to be quiet, maybe what he was actually doing was preventing the spread of misinformation. How often do we speak before we know the whole story? What if we truly listened to understand before we spoke? What if our leaders (of our families, our workplaces, our communities, our cities, our churches, our countries, our world) did the same? I believe we'd have more compassion and understanding for each other and less division. Let's try to take a step back this week and be better listeners - suspend our own agendas; take genuine interest in what other people are saying; and avoid judgment and instead focus on understanding the other's perspective.