

Sept. 6-7, 2014

Thoughts from the pastor,

Last week's bulletin included the introduction of Hannah Keisling, our new youth minister. This parish has had a great tradition of youth ministry. Cassie Sheik had been coordinator for the past few years and was such a blessing. One of the blessing of this program has been the vocations that have come from it. Of course I get very excited about the seminarians that were inspired through their interaction in the program. But I also get thrilled by the beautiful marriages that have come from it. Some have been couples who met in the program and others were marriages in which one person grew in faith from their Overflow experience and met someone outside the program. The benefits to those couples are easily seen as I do the preparation for their weddings.

What saddens me is that so many of our high school students do not take part in this opportunity. I hear lots of excuses. Some say they are in Catholic high schools so they don't feel they need to attend, and yet many of our best members of Overflow are finding the benefits of having this "extra" time with the Lord to be a true blessing for them. Others say that they are so busy with their school work and activities in public high school that they just don't have time. This scares me. "What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" (Mk. 8:36)

These are young people who have just received the Sacrament of Confirmation and made a vow to the Lord that they would take responsibility for their faith-life. This means that God will hold them responsible. They can't possibly know all they need to know about Jesus and His Church just because they finished elementary school. I'm starting grade 7 of my formal education in Christ and I consider myself just starting. It is also so very important that they have this time to discuss important topics that come up in their life within a structure that can guide them. The world is changing very rapidly and going on their own is not safe. I hope you will help me in encouraging more young people to participate. Parents, grandparents and all family members should be helping them to attend. This is more important than just encouraging them to eat their vegetables. Those will help them be healthier for a few years. This is for eternal life.

The Overflow experience is not just a matter of going to another class. It is a chance to come to know the Lord. The young people are guided through many different experiences. They do get a chance to hear more information like they would in a class but then they have time to discuss it in ways that would not work in a classroom. They have opportunities to interact with each other on their journey with Christ in this world. They can share some of their experiences and trials with each other. They are given time to really understand what it means to build a relationship with the Lord by praising Him and spending time with Him. This happens with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the retreats that come twice a year. They also get to hear how that affects others and how each person has a unique experience in their friendship with Jesus. They get to show their love in service to others and by doing it with other like-minded journeyers they can have fun doing it. Spread the news.

God bless you all,
Fr. Frank