

June 14-15, 2014

Thoughts from the pastor,

Don't you just love mosquitoes? Having lived in Minnesota for four years for college and even spending three of those summers in that state I really came to dislike them. I wondered why Noah would have saved two of them, one male and one female. Then I realized that he didn't have to. They would have loved the flood. They would have thrived in it. It seems amazing, or an act of God, that any animal or human survived after the flood with all the mosquitoes that would have hatched in all that standing water. For a long time I was really paranoid of them. When they started to carry West Nile disease I actually became afraid of them.

I bring this up in order to talk a little about temptation. Most temptations are irritating things that can make us do crazy things. The problem is dealing with those temptations. It is not easy. We never know when we are safe. It is like the guy who said that the sound of a mosquito buzzing around in your bedroom is scary. But it is when it stops buzzing that should scare us. It is the same way with temptations. When we have to face them head on it is scary because we know how easy it is to fall. But we should also be scared when we seemed to have won because the temptation is not bothering us, when it seems quiet.

The quiet can be the calm before a worse storm or it can be the time when our own inner self gets us into the worst sin, pride. Pride shows up when we think we have conquered our temptations and are free. The reality is that we did not conquer anything. It is only with God's grace that we can fight any evil, so we can't take any credit for winning a battle. So by accepting the credit we are losing God and falsely inflating our own ego. That is not a good place to be in our spiritual journey. But accepting life with the reality of constant temptations is scary. We do have to remember that it will end when we die. It is strange that we have such a hard time accepting that reality. We are told in scripture that we need to hold out until the end (our death) but we want to be freed from temptation before that. We want to be free now. That is not the reality for us as human beings. It would be like living life without any resistance; no obstacles, no challenges, and no struggles. We would be weak. That resistance is what makes us strong.

It is not that we should go out and look for temptation. That would be like going out to a swamp to find mosquitoes. If you do that you will definitely get bitten often. The idea is to fight wisely. So just like with mosquitoes, you have to be wise enough to stay out of the swamp. As a matter of fact it is a good idea to drain all of the places where the mosquito larva can grow. We need to strengthen ourselves with wisdom so we have a chance in this battle with temptation. But what does wisdom tell us? With mosquitoes it is a matter of understanding that mosquitoes don't hang out in direct sunlight. They like the shadows. We need to stay in the Son if we are going to have a chance with fighting temptations.

God bless you all,
Fr. Frank