

March 14-15, 2015

Thoughts from the pastor,

As I mentioned last week I will be gone this weekend to be the Spiritual Director of the C.E.C. weekend (Christians Encounter Christ). That is always such a joy for me. I hope those of you who haven't made one of these awesome weekends will give it a chance in the next year or so. I am giving you warning so you can plan. Also in terms of scheduling there will be a Communion Service and no Mass this Thursday evening because Fr. John and I will be at Msgr. Hanefeldt's ordination.

Fr. John's presentation last Sunday was very nice. He presented part of the final paper he wrote for his degree in Spirituality. The reason this is so important is that his diocese is one of seven in Togo, West Africa. There are approximately 1,500,000 Catholics in Togo which is over 25% of the total population. About 20% is Muslim, but they get along fairly well. There is one Archdiocese. Most of the area is very poor. His own diocese is only twenty years old although the Archdiocese of Loma, the capital of Togo, was established 120 years ago. But in terms of Catholic Church years that is all very new.

The poverty is part of the problem that Fr. John will be working with. The majority of the education is done in what we call thatched-roof huts. It is an oral tradition because there is little money for books. The seminaries for the country are in solid but very simple buildings. There is about 500 seminarians at this time. Fr. John is trying to help the priests of his country in their spiritual formation by providing books in a resource library. This way they can look things up and follow up on different spiritual traditions. There is already a large solid room that the bishops have okayed for this use, but then come the other costs. To build solid shelves will cost about \$4,500. Tables, desks and chairs for groups and individuals would be \$6,500. A used copy machine would be \$5,000. A simple computer for keeping track of the books would be \$800. And then to purchase the main selection of books needed in French would be \$10,000. Anything you can give to help would make a difference in the education of literally thousands of priests over the next decade or so. Next Sunday's second collection will be earmarked for this project. Donations should be written out to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton for your tax purposes and we will then make sure the money goes to the right place.

I also had a meeting of interested people to talk about the proposed stain-glass window project on Thursday. One of the purposes of the committee was to figure out priorities in terms of which windows we would want and where we would like to place them. I will have a power point presentation on their ideas at the town hall meeting next Sunday, 3/22, which will be in the church after the 11am Mass. Just a reminder, Deacon Marty Crowley has volunteered to be the voice of anyone who would like to voice comments anonymously. Just call him at 402-498-3562 or 498-1169.

The other thing we will be discussing at the town hall meeting will be the potential impact of going from a fulltime associate pastor to a retired priest in residence. This could impact weekday and weekend Mass schedules, so please make a point to attend.

Another thing that will be happening next weekend is that we will have the miraculous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the church Saturday and Sunday. We had people coming from all over the city last time. Many people have been able to feel her heartbeat on this image painted on wood. There have been amazing and miraculous things attributed to this image, especially in terms of pregnancy.

God bless you all,
Fr. Frank