

Nov. 19-20, 2016

Thoughts from the pastor,

Well you have had a vacation from me for three weeks. I hope you all enjoyed the rest. I know that I enjoyed my rest even though I was able to get a lot of things done while I was gone. To give you an idea of how it went I started by flying to Hong Kong. I spent two days of sightseeing in that city. They were on the edge of a tsunami a week before I got there but it didn't seem as if there was any damage because of the way it is all laid out. Then I boarded the M.S. Volendam, one of the Holland America fleet. This is the only cruise line that has a priest on each trip to have Masses for the passengers and the crew. That is why I go with them. They offer the cruise for free to the priest because we become a part of the crew for the trip.

Our first stop was in Halong Bay which are the Vietnam Islands near Hanoi. I had been there before so I used that day and a day at sea to rest, read, walk, eat, and sleep. I walked seven miles every day that it was possible. That along with eating a lot of vegetables made it possible to lose five pounds on the trip. The next stop was Danang, Vietnam. That is where I had arranged to visit the Sisters of the Lovers of the Holy Cross that I had worked with since my trip with a medical missionary group eight years ago. Several of us have been helping them with the phenomenal growth that their community has had in the last ten years. Since I was there eight and six years ago they have put up three buildings, are finishing a fourth, trained one of their nuns to be a nurse and three to be doctors. The first doctor to go through the training I had seen six years ago when she was half way through her training. The other two doctors I saw on this trip. My tour guide/translator and I had lunch with the Sisters and received a tour of all that they were doing in the immediate area. They have split off into four other areas in the last eight years and continue to grow. The building that they were finishing up was to house and train all the new members that were joining their community.

After visiting the Sisters in Hue I asked the tour guide if he understood why I had him bypass Danang and drive two hours to see the Sisters in Hue. He said he had never experienced anything like that place or any people who were so nice in his life. He was almost in tears. I was at that point for the whole two hours I was with them. For me it was a taste of heaven, which is where we will get to hang out with all the people we have helped throughout our lives, and feel the gratitude of the work we have done. We will also be able to express our gratitude to all of those who have helped us.

Then there was another stop in Vietnam, a stop in Cambodia, and three stops in Thailand. Cambodia is really suffering from poverty from lack of good leadership these last decades. Thailand seems to be doing much better but the country was in mourning because their king had died after being a loving king for fifty years. It was as if they had lost their beloved grandfather. I was able to see a lot of temples and shrines. Most of those were a mixture of Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, etc. It will be interesting to see how those faiths work out that blending process that is happening. They have no leaders like our Pope to help them. It could be problematic because it makes it probable that they would simply fall into the ways of the current culture of the time.

My last stop was in Singapore where I was able to visit some of the ex-members of the Patrist community that Fr. Mario had been a part of. They had disbanded over twenty years ago and I had been there at the time to help them through the process. I had gone to visit some of them in Singapore 22 years ago to show them support. Going back to Singapore to see them again was a

real treat. That island country, which is the size of the land space of Omaha now has about six million people. I spent two days there and have pictures to prove it.

Then I came home to work on the regular parish stuff and also the major project that I am asking input from you for the decisions. Because of the hail storm that we had on May 11th there is a lot of damage to the roof of our facility. The asphalt shingles over the parish hall and the rectory are shot. The tan paint that is the signature of our buildings is peeling off because of the hail. I have finally worked it out with the insurance company to replace and repair the damage. That took a while to organize but we are ready to move forward. The problems that come up because of that are what I need input on.

The roof over the church is tile and was not damaged by the hail but has more leaks than the rest of the building because it is the oldest. The problem is the felt under the tile shingles. It is deteriorating. We had thought of doing a partial fix of the worst section of it but that will not solve the problem. To take off all the shingles, redo the roof, and replace all the shingles would cost nearly \$200,000 dollars. A big part of that is that those tile shingles are not made any more so manufacturing replacements when some break is a big problem. That problem will rear its head as we replace the skylights in the church which were damaged by the hailstorm. Another problem is that the center of the south side of the church roof is sagging. My guess is that there is wet wood that is sagging under the weight of those very heavy shingles. There is also a sag somewhere else because the metal trim around the base of the shingled part of the church roof has shifted and broken the welds that hold it in place. You can see the zig-zag broken seam on each side of that beam if you stand outside and look up at the roof of the church. The breaks are on each side of the front section just under the tile roof.

These problems must be solved but there is a possible solution. My suggestion is that we go to a metal roof which would be maintenance free. They now make these metal roofs to look exactly like shingled roofs. The question is whether you think it should look like and/or match the shade of the church tile roof, or the parish hall and rectory asphalt roofs. Right now they do not match. If we switch to a metal or an asphalt shingle roof on the church we can pay for it by selling the tile shingles that we remove. They are in high demand by people who have these kinds of roofs and have some breakage. Another money resource would be to remove the metal decorative trim that is around the base of the tile roof, sell the metal as scrap, and replace it with a wooden trim that would be covered with metal sheeting colored to match what we have. This would lessen the weight and still take care of one of its purposes which is to help break up the snow sliding off the roof before it hits the flat rubberized roof below it. Two things to note. If we do go with a metal roof we can do it now. If we go with asphalt shingles we will probably have to wait until spring to do the project because it is not warm enough now to seal them. The metal roof would have insulation that would eliminate the tin roof sound many people worry about.

The Parish Council will be discussing these plans this Tuesday. Please give me or one of the Council members your input ASAP. Current members are: Tom Schrad, Dave Spargo, Meg Petersen, Shelly Gray, Cathy Keisling, Mike Haley, Tom Fryda, Ann Fryda, Randy Bergstrom, Tom Fitzgerald, and Heather Vyff. What we need input on would be: Do we go with metal or asphalt shingles? Do we go ahead and work on all shingled parts of the roof at the same time, church, hall, and rectory? Do we go with the color tone of the hall or church shingles?

God bless you,
Fr. Frank