

Sept. 9-10, 2017

Thoughts from the pastor,

Michael Howick has accepted the Maintenance position for the parish. He will be replacing Leon Kloke in the next couple weeks. I am still looking in terms of the cleaning job. This is about 10-15 hours per week. If interested, call me at 402-677-1565.

Another bit of good news is that we have another young person signed up to serve God in a special way. Tim or T.J. Simpson, son of Tom and Jan, has been accepted to join the Benedictine Monastery in Atchison, KS. He went to college down there and was impressed with their service to God and was accepted to be a postulant. God willing that will turn into him becoming a novice. At this time he does not feel a calling to be a priest but is working to be a Brother in their monastery. This is just another great sign that our young people realize that serving God in these special ways is important. Now we just need some of our young women to become Sisters and we will have the three main parts of Consecrated Life; priests, Brothers, & Sisters. Our prayers for vocations are being answered. Keep praying and encouraging our young people.

For Labor Day I went out to the State Fair in Grand Island. I was able to see pig and duck racing. They do not race against each other, but that would be interesting. As I already knew from growing up on a farm, those animals are really fast when they are about to get food. I also indulged in one of my favorite hobbies, visiting beautiful churches. I saw St. Anthony's in Cedar Rapids, St. Bonaventure in Raeville, St. Patrick's in Battle Creek, St. Aloysius in Aloys, St. Boniface in Monterey, Sacred Heart in Olean, and St. Anthony's in St. Charles. If you have been reading your Catholic Voice you know that the Archbishop is doing a study to see how we can restructure these rural area parishes as we face dwindling numbers of priests. Each one of those parishes I was at faces the possibility of being made into a chapel and no longer function as a parish. Each one of those church buildings is a magnificent testimony to the faith of the people in those communities.

I don't have the statistics for our Archdiocese but there was a study done a few years ago that showed the average age for priests in 1950 was 52 years old. In 2005 it was 62 years old. I was able to talk with some of the people in those parishes as I visited. Most of them know me because I grew up near some of them and have served in those areas. I also found out that Fr. Don and I are famous out there because we do the Mass for shut-ins on TV.

Each of these parishes are hoping they can stay open. They hoped that maybe the priests could just drive to more parishes to have Mass. Others thought we should get more foreign priests to come here. They don't realize that neither of these alternatives work very well. The ageing of priests makes that traveling difficult. Finding foreign priests who fit in well in Nebraska is also a difficult task. The reality is that we simply need more families to be open to vocations in their family and even encourage them. Then we need to have more young people be willing to try out the possibility. I was so proud of Connor Kerschinske for trying out the seminary to see if he was being called. He wasn't but at least he had the courage to try. God has always used good men and women to help the world understand His ways for us. Our current generation is no different.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank