

Mar. 3-4, 2018

Thoughts from the pastor,

I hope you were all able to figure out how the “Holy Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert,” after discussing that Gospel passage a couple weeks ago. This week you might discuss how “God delivered all these commandments.” Or you might try to figure out what cords Jesus might have used to make the whip He used to drive the money changers out of the temple. It might sound like a silly exercise but it starts the conversation and everyone will remember the scripture passage when you are done. Children have wonderful memories. Wouldn't it be nice if they had pleasant memories about family discussions about scripture and what they learned from them?

Over the last month a few of you have heard rumors that I might be leaving SEAS this summer. There was actually another job that the Archbishop thought I might be well suited for. After a month of discernment he decided to give the job to another candidate. So you are cursed or blessed with me for a while yet. That sounds a little like what I describe to couples as I prepare them for marriage. If they work together marriage will be a blessing. If not, it will be a curse. My assignment at SEAS is not a marriage so it is not usually until death. There have been priests who have gone that way but I don't think God will take me that soon. He seems to have a lot more work for me to do, so we will be working together on more projects.

I always wonder what you dream about when you are stressed. I think about that because I'm fairly sure that your dreams at night are not similar to mine. A common theme that I have is that I am trying to say Mass and it isn't working. Everything goes wrong. The readings are all messed up. The sacred vessels have dirt falling into them from the ceiling which is deteriorating. I am having a hard time keeping track of everything and the Mass is all out of order. Because of that people are getting confused and frustrated so they are leaving early. Then I wake up and I realize that people are leaving early but I am happy to see that the roof is still in good shape. In case you are wondering when the Mass is officially over, think of when it started. That was when the priest entered. It is over when he leaves.

Actually I haven't fallen asleep during Mass for a long time, but I do have those kinds of dreams at night. It is one of the reasons I push myself to make the liturgy what it is meant to be. It is a participation in the sacrifice of Christ so we can be forgiven for our sins. It is not primarily about me or anyone of you. It is about Jesus. We are celebrating what He does for us, but it is a celebration of something very spiritual. It is not an entertainment for the crowd. Several cultures have had arenas in which sacrifices were made for the entertainment of the crowds. That is how many the martyrs died. And while it was happening the crowds would cheer and applaud. That is one of several reasons that I would like to remind you again that applause is not appropriate at the end of Mass. Yes the musicians do a great job, but hopefully they are using their skills to honor the Lord and not for their own glory or they will get no reward in heaven. We should be leaving Mass inspired to love and serve the Lord and not thinking, “That was such an amazing show.”

So it is important that we can keep the attention of everyone, young and old; but that attention should still be on Jesus and His message for us.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank