

May 26-27, 2018

Thoughts from the pastor,

Last week's letter was news items for the calendar. There is one more thing to add to that list. Fr. John Zotoglo will be doing a presentation on the progress of his Spirituality Center on Sunday, 6/3, after the 11am Mass. The 2nd collection that weekend will be for that project.

This week the message is a lot more serious. Many of you have heard that some of the priest's assignments are being announced. One of those was that our parish son, Fr. Nick Mishek, was to be assigned to St. Vincent de Paul Parish. Fr. Nick has gone through so much since he was ordained a year ago. He made what some would call a judgment error while hearing the confessions of junior high students. I wrote about that problem last year when it came up. I told you what I had heard from some of the people I trust at St. Robert's where he had been stationed, that he was a good priest and a good confessor. Could he have made a better decision? Certainly, but he was only out of the seminary a few months.

In my mind the reaction of many of the parishioners at St. Roberts was way off base. I attributed that to some of them having a very strong sensitivity to the priest scandals of the last couple decades. Well the problem is back. Fr. Nick, at the request of the Archbishop, has gone through intensive evaluations, counseling, observation, testing, and many other hoops to show that he is a good priest. The result of that is that the Archbishop is confident that he is ready and able to serve in parish ministry without limitations, probation or anything else. Even with all that, there were a bunch of people at St. Vincent de Paul who decided they didn't want him in their parish.

I attribute some of this to the same over-reaction that happened at St. Roberts. They also seem to have a high sensitivity because they have had priests go astray in the last ten years. One turned out to be very good at lying and the other had problems with drugs. Their pastor has had to deal with those situations and his own physical health issues. Maybe they are trying to protect him as pastor.

The problem is that there is another factor that keeps getting forgotten. I mentioned it last year and I mention it now because SEAS has had four 1st Masses in the last four years. That means our families produce vocations. We have the families and friends of those four men in our parish to help us remember that these young men are not Jesus incarnated. They are not infallible. They will make mistakes. We seem to be able to realize this when other parishes can't. It is not that there haven't been priests with problems in SEAS. In terms of associates, we have had two leave the priesthood because of difficulties, another asked to leave, and others needing to go through treatment. We have had two pastors who had very significant problems in their past. I am proud to say that you have worked through all of that and still produced these vocations and continue to be a great parish. You wisely realized that no one is perfect except Jesus and Mary so we had better learn how to help each other out, rather than keep doing things that will potentially destroy the very men we need to provide our sacraments.

This past week there was a comic strip in the OWH called Pearls Before Swine that hit it on the head.

Person 1: "Pardon me, but I was offended by something you said." Person 2: "I was more offended."

Person 3: "I was even more offended." The target of this anger: "Is this a competition?" Person 3: Yes, nowadays, the most offended person wins." The target of this anger: "This is a very annoying era."

Person 3: "Now I boycott your smug little face!"

The reality is that we all have faced things that offended us. So did Jesus. Thankfully he taught us to forgive. Hopefully we can learn from him and not from this present generation, for Fr. Nick's sake and all of our future priests. If we get any willing to be ordained in this climate.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank