

Jan. 4-5, 2014

Thoughts from the pastor,

I may be weird but with each passing year I get less and less excited about celebrating New Year's Day. The good news is that I get more excited about the new liturgical year, so for me New Year's Day is the 1st Sunday of Advent. This year that almost passed me by because of what we were dealing with in the transition of changing Fr. Franks. But Fr. Frank the elder seems to be doing very well with all the changes in his life, including the car accident and I feel like things are falling in place for me as the new pastor.

So now Advent is over and we are well into the Christmas season. I hope you haven't all taken down every bit of Christmas decorations. This Feast of Epiphany is when we should be thinking about doing that but it is not a rush because the Christmas season can be carried on until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord which is next weekend. These are the things that my whole life revolves around. I feel it is actually sad that it took me so long to release much of the worldly year and be able to focus more on the yearly reliving of a life with Christ. Well with age comes wisdom. I am just glad that wisdom is happening for sometimes just age shows up with no wisdom.

Next weekend we will also have the beginning of the National Vocation Awareness Week. We start that by taking up the collection for seminarians. Like all education the training of seminarians is becoming more and more expensive. We are so blessed at SEAS to have visible seminarians. Having five from our parish is the envy of all the other parishes. With this collection I would like to start or restart a policy for the second collection. From now on when there is any kind of special collection after Communion it will be for that purpose alone. So for instance next weekend all the money from the second collection will go to the seminarian's education. It will not matter if you have the special envelope or not. There have been times in the past year or so when that has been unclear. But when there is no specific outside need, then the second collection will simply be to retire the parish debt.

Over these next weeks you will also be hearing a lot about the *Ignite the Faith Capital* Campaign. This is a major fundraising effort that will address several urgent and upcoming needs in our archdiocese; taking care of retired priests, encouraging new vocations, strengthening our Catholic schools and investing in faith formation programs. Every parish household will receive their campaign packet later this month. I will mention more about those packets and the process that goes with them next week. I hope and pray that as a parish we can do our part in making this campaign a success.

I was blessed in being a part of the process of much of the preparation for the educational part of this campaign. Being pastor at Holy Name I was right in the heart of the planning. Having the new responsibility for St. James/Seton School to worry about doesn't change my understanding of the importance of the Archbishop's plan for the future of Catholic education in the Archdiocese. So stay tuned for further developments.

May God bless you,
Fr. Frank