

Mar. 15-16, 2014

Thoughts from the pastor,

This weekend we have Fr. Hoelsing for the Parish Mission. For those of you who don't know him, it is pronounced 'hay sing'. He is a farm boy from one of my old parishes, St. Boniface in Menominee, NE. He is a marvelous speaker. I have heard him with teenagers and adults and he is always great with drawing your imagination into the theme. As our Vocations Director for the Archdiocese of Omaha he has a lot of contact with our guys in the seminary and is the one to contact if you are thinking about it.

His topic is perfect right now for SEAS, "The Parish: A School of Prayer." It fits so well into what seems to be the common vision of many of you in this parish. I have always been thrilled with the numbers of prayer groups that are going on in this parish. The tradition of parishioners involved in the Christians Encounter Christ movement, C.E.C. is a big part of that. It has been the stepping stone for our powerful Deacon ministry in the parish. It has also been nice that we have had workshops on Contemplative Prayer the last few years. Fr. Walter Nolte's influence on the parish has been a connection with "Healing Ministry" prayer. I am also hoping to have Fr. Michael Voithofer, who is currently at St. Roberts, connect his "ablaze" praise and worship prayer ministry happening here.

Obviously I have not heard Fr. Hoelsing's talks yet but I am sure he will be mentioning a very important aspect of parish life that a friend of his, Fr. James Mason, presented to many of our vocation committee members last year. His focus was that as a parish we must pray first and act second. That is why I prayed so hard before starting the year-long Bible Study. Without the gifts of the Holy Spirit flowing during this year it will have little fruit. But with His help it will be a true blessing for the parish. I hope your prayer group is praying for its success for all the people involved. "Come Holy Spirit."

The first Sunday session of the Bible Study went very well. I was rushing in from the Engaged Encounter to see about 200 people ready for the first lesson. I was so impressed that no one forgot their Bible. I do have some in case someone is not ready in the future. There didn't even seem to be any traffic problems.

This is one of the seasons that Fr. John and I get to see many of the different parishes and schools as we travel around to help with confessions for Lent. It means that we are guaranteed to have very busy weeks. To compensate I do skip a few meetings in order to make time for this essential Sacrament. It is a big sacrifice to miss a meeting but I am willing to do it occasionally. After all, God so loved the world that He sent His Son and not a committee. Thank you Lord. But after prayer it is our people in the parish coming together with their ideas, plans and strategies that make things happen. Our Fish-fry every other Friday night is a simple sign of that. The Knights of Columbus get organized through prayer and planning at their meetings and because of that people have an opportunity to have a pleasant evening and keep their abstinence from meat. I hope to see you there this Friday.

As I go around to all hear all the confessions at the schools it always saddens me how many of our children aren't coming to Mass on a regular basis. My father's line to me and my siblings as we scooped snow to clear a way to get to Sunday Mass still rings in my head. "Wouldn't you feel bad if you didn't get this cleared... and we missed our opportunity to go to church and thank God for all the good things that we have?" The best thing I have from God, that I thank Him for all the time, was on my mind on Ash Wednesday. If you took all the moisture out of our bodies we would be dust. But as the story of creation that many of you just read says, we also have the breath of life from Him. I thank Him for that all the time.

God bless you,  
Fr. Frank