

Apr. 5-6, 2014

Thoughts from the pastor,

I am happy to announce that our parish has topped 50% of our goal in the Archbishop's Capital Campaign, "Ignite the Fire." Many of you have not made a pledge. I hope you will still consider a gift. The goals of the campaign are fairly simple. Help out our retired priests who have given their lives towards helping you reach heaven. In case you are wondering if their pension from the Archdiocese is too much, realize that the current pension is about one-third of a priest's salary. The campaign is also about helping our schools that are located in some of the worst poverty areas in our Archdiocese. These schools help to bring these children out of the cycle of poverty. O.P.S. has a 50% graduation rate in that area. Our Catholic Schools are at about 97% and about 80% of those go on to college. In my mind that is a good investment. It also helps with our seminarian fund. You should decide if you want good priests in the future. It is a three year campaign but our primary pledging time is over in about six weeks. Those of you who have not pledged yet will receive a letter this week with materials so you won't have to look for your other one. After Easter we will have a final commitment Sunday to finish the campaign pledging period. There will be pledge sheets in the pews that week.

Last week we had the funeral for a long time parishioner, Margaret Rose Carlin. She had also been a parishioner at Holy Name parish, where her children went to school. (That is one of the schools being helped by the campaign.) It is also where one of her sons, Fr. Bernie, got his vocation to become a Redemptorist priest. Seven Redemptorists were here for the funeral, one was an Archbishop. I was the first non-Redemptorist priest to be pastor at Holy Name. They built that parish to become one of the most amazing parishes in the Omaha area. I was also blessed to see many of the places around Europe where the Redemptorists made an impact with their missionary efforts over the last 275 years. They started in Italy and then they went all over the world. Holy Name parish became a well-spring of Redemptorist vocations just like I hope and pray that SEAS Parish will be for the future.

One of the things that Margaret Rose did for SEAS was to donate the image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help that we have in our chapel. The original was given to the Redemptorists for safe keeping and to promote the devotion to Mary around the world. My family has been very strong in our devotion to OLPH since the Redemptorists brought it to Ss. Peter & Paul Church in Howells through a parish mission. I doubt if my Dad missed five Saturday night devotions in 41 years. Those devotions keep faith alive for many people. It is like the rosary, in that it makes a personal connection with members of the family of God, Mary & Jesus. Oddly enough it makes that connection by being boring, which means a person has to meditate, reflect and imagine being with Mary and Jesus. It is not all done for us. It drives kids crazy to start this but before long it actually builds into their minds and hearts a love that will last a lifetime. But it is not done overnight.

It is just like sports. Practicing is boring but it builds skills over time that will make the sport your own. For that reason I love sports. I also get mad at how, for some families, they become an end to themselves. That is seen when they replace the practice of our faith and become a false god. But sports provide wonderful lessons for us on how to overcome adversity, build strengths, work together, and learn how to achieve a goal. With our faith adversity is sin, virtues build strength, we work together with the family of God, and our goal is to be in heaven. Please pray that all of our loved ones and friends who have died will reach that goal, especially Margaret Rose Carlin, and all our benefactors.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank