

June 7-8, 2014

Thoughts from the pastor,

With the ordinations and 1st Mass that we are celebrating this weekend I figured that I better be reflecting more on priesthood. I did take a moment acknowledge my history. I headed off for the seminary just short of 48 years ago. After twelve years in the seminary I was blessed with the grace of God to be ordained a priest. That was supposedly when I sacrificed so much in order to serve God. But as Jesus told his disciples, if you give up father and mother, brother and sister, wife and home for me; I will give you one hundred times as many of those. He wasn't kidding. I have had hundreds of mothers and thousands of brothers and sisters. I have only had about eighteen homes so far but that has been all I have needed.

Matt Capadano and Ben Boyd became priests on this Saturday, June 7. They will live a life of sacrifice. They will be asked to give of themselves to help thousands of people over the years. It will take a lot out of them. Will it be worth it? The core of that answer is yes because God set things up that way. That happened when Jesus taught us through His sacrifice on the cross that giving of yourself is well worth it. Jesus died so that we could have eternal life. That was the ultimate sacrifice. If He had not done that we couldn't go to heaven. Because of sin our only option was to live a relatively miserable life and then die and end up in hell. He gave us the option of heaven. We just have to become like Him and be willing to sacrifice.

But the word sacrifice is still a roadblock for many people. The problem is that they don't make the immediate connection between sacrifice and love. Love without sacrifice is narcissism, or love of self. I do what makes me happy and the heck with anyone else. Unless you add sacrifice or giving of yourself, that is all you have. But once you give of yourself for another you open yourself to another kind of love all together. This is Godly love. The problem is that it is risky. What if you give of yourself and no one gives back. It is painful, unfulfilled love. It is what God did for us. He loved us first. He risked being ignored. For this reason we never have to risk like He did. We should always know that He loved us first and proved it by offering us the possibility of salvation. He even invited us to become a part of His royal family. This should give us the confidence to give of ourselves.

This is what men do when they become priests. They trust in the Lord's love and go out and give what they have received to others, the grace of salvation. When a person gets married then can give something else that they have received, the gift of life. Either way it is a sacrifice but it is less scary if you understand how God started it. It is even less scary when we trust in God's promise of eternal life with Him in paradise when we make this leap of faith.

Just another quick mention that besides the regular Vacation Bible School at St. James we are also offering Totus Tuus here at St. Elizabeth Ann. Both are awesome. Totus Tuus involves the children in a little longer sessions but they have a lot of fun and learn a lot. This program has been offered around the country and the Archdiocese for just a few years but is already growing by leaps and bounds. I hope you will consider sending your children.

But next weekend you will hopefully notice a new face around the parish. Conor Bopp will be at the parish for about seven weeks, staying at the rectory. I will have him introduce himself as soon as possible.

God bless you and may the Holy Spirit be with you all,
Fr. Frank