

Aug. 2-3, 2014

Thoughts from the pastor,

Last weekend we started sign-ups for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Versions of this program have been offered for the children at SEAS for a bunch of years. In the last few years we have become one of the only programs that has all certified teachers in the Omaha area. But more and more parishes are starting to look at getting their own programs started. It is a very hands on program that helps children understand the liturgy and its basis in scripture and church teachings. This year we are starting Level II section for 6 to 9 year olds. Up to now it has just been for 3 ó 6 year olds.

One of the questions that have come up with the program from some parents is in terms of the timing. Some hope that it can be held during Mass times so it can keep the small children occupied during Mass with this other activity so they don't disrupt people in church. Up to now I have allowed some flexibility in this area but this year I am making sure the timing is not during Mass. The reasons are very simple.

The first one is that it doesn't make any sense to have children learn about the Mass and not attend. It would be like having them learn about school but not have them actually go to school. The second reason is that eventually the children will have to learn how to behave in church and it is easier to teach them earlier than later. One of my favorite family counselors puts it this way. When is the best time to house train your dog, at three months or one year old? Of course the best answer is at three months. It is hard to teach an old dog new tricks. The third reason is that the main reason for the teaching is to help them make the connection between what they are learning and what is actually happening at Mass. If they don't go to Mass the connection is never made and the learning is empty and they learn only for the sake of learning instead of learning how to understand God's connection to their lives in the Eucharist. I see this so often in many of our St. James/Seton School and P.R.E. students who don't attend Mass on Sundays. They learn how important it is to attend but then the actions of their family tells them it is unimportant. Their confusion leads to more absences over the years.

The first part of this week Fr. John's bishop will be staying at the rectory. He does not speak English but Fr. John will be his guide to translate his French, etc. I will be on retreat at the Benedictine Retreat Center in Schuyler from Monday afternoon until Friday afternoon. And on Thursday Fr. Philip John from Pakistan will be coming to stay at the rectory until Sept. 3. He will be doing mission appeals in different parishes on the weekends but will be helping with some of the weekday Masses after Fr. John leaves on his work/vacation trip starting Aug. 16. I am contemplating installing a revolving on the rectory.

Which gets me to a simple question that comes up a lot. People see me as very busy. I am. I love what I do and both God and I hate seeing me without something to do. But one of the things that I want you as parishioners to understand is that I am here for you first and foremost. When there is nothing else scheduled I will be signing up for all sorts of things all over the city to help out whenever and wherever I can. But my priority is here. Never be nervous about calling me. That is why I have my cell-phone listed on the front page of the bulletin. Even if I can't answer at the moment, I will get back to you as quickly as possible. This is just in case you might be confused.

God bless you all,  
Fr. Frank