

Nov. 15-16, 2014

Thoughts from the pastor,

I am hoping we have a few months reprieve before another cycle of election ads start up. We are blessed to live in this democracy but democracy has to be understood in order to work. It is our way of government but it definitely goes bad when it creeps into other areas of our lives.

One area that most people understand would be business. One of Burger King's biggest ad campaigns was "Have it your way." You don't hear that much anymore. It is not that you can't modify their sandwiches, but rather that just about everyone is used to it now and expects all restaurants to function that way. Some do and some don't, but even those that do there is a limit. For instance I would not get very far if I asked for it for free, or if I wanted free delivery of a Whopper to my home. That would be in the realm of having it my way but not in their parameters. I am certainly free to want things my way but a business is also free to simply refuse to serve me.

I loved listening to Bill Cosby talk about raising children and mentioning that after you have three or more they can out-vote the parents. He made it very clear that even though this was a different kind of challenge there is no actual democracy in the family. The parents make the rule. Children are to follow them or there are consequences. Schools are like that. Children do not get to rule or it would be chaos. I actually imagine that it would be worse than a prison in which the prisoners ruled. It would be the story of "Lord of the Flies" all over.

The Kingdom of God is not a democracy. I have mentioned this in previous letters but it always amazes me how many people think this is the case. I suppose that part of it comes from some of our Protestant denominations, who actually are to the point of voting on issues of morality. They are not consulting God. They are consulting each other. I don't think it will change God's mind, especially if we consider the passage in the Gospel of Luke 13: 23-24 in which Jesus was asked, "Lord, will only a few people be saved?" He answered them, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough." If majority rules, it is not in heaven. Psalm 46:10 clarifies it even more, "Be still and know that I am God." He gets to be the boss of me.

The big question is whether you noticed how quickly your thoughts on the election passed out of your mind. That was God's gift to us, a weather change. When it suddenly got very cold we quickly started to think about survival and not politics. I had an especially good dose of the alternative thinking as I headed up to St. Paul, MN to see the Omaha seminarians up there. The weather forecast had me expecting the end of the world as I approached the Minnesota border. It didn't help that it was sunny and warm until I did get to that border. At that point I was faced with darkness as I faced a huge cloud bank. But I was spared because there was no snow until I got to the Twin Cities and they only had about three inches, but it was cold. That confirms my thoughts for years, that there are no stupid people in Minnesota. There are many crazy ones but no stupid ones for they would be dead in twenty minutes because Mother Nature is out to kill you up there. The good news is that the seminarians are having a good time, and like everyone else up there, consider survival itself as something to be proud of.

The guys will hopefully all become hardy and holy priests. Keep praying for them.

God bless you all,  
Fr. Frank