

Nov. 8-9, 2014

Thoughts from the pastor,

Lots of different news items this week. Fr. John and I will be offering the Anointing of the Sick during the homily time next weekend, 11/15-16. This is for anyone seriously ill either short term or chronically. It is also for anyone over 65 years of age who would like to receive it, or people who are going to be having serious surgery soon. We will do this Saturday night and at all the Sunday Masses.

I will be leaving early Monday morning to visit some of the Omaha seminarians at St. John Vianney Seminary in St. Paul, MN. I will be back Wednesday afternoon. Please pray that I don't get snowed in. This is my Alma Mater but I graduated 40 years ago. I know that things have changed since I went there. One of our parish seminarians, Connor Kerschinske, is having his first year up there.

There is a move around the State of Nebraska to end the death penalty. This is not the first time. This is a tough issue. Some people see it as the same as abortion because it is killing. It is similar but not the same. Abortion is always an innocent child being killed. The presumption is that the death penalty is to end the life of someone who is guilty of a heinous crime. There are several reasons why it would be a good time to end this. The first that I go by is from Pope John Paul II who believed that the main reason for the death penalty no longer exists. He believed it was to keep the general public safe. This no longer is the case in most situations. Despite the recent confusion we have had in our state with prisoners being released early, our criminal justice system is basically very good. So the pope's idea was that as long as everyone is safe it is better to have the criminal in jail for life, so he has a chance to repent in this life, rather than end his life early.

Another reason is that new technology has actually proven that some of those who have been on death row were actually innocent. This is unnerving to know that we may be killing an innocent person. I know that I would not like to be in that situation. Being in jail for a crime I did not commit would be bad enough but I am hoping that I will not have to follow Jesus in that way. He died for our sins. I hope I am strong enough to die for my faith but I still don't want to die for someone else's crime.

And then there is my very practical reason for ending the death penalty. It is supposedly three times more expensive, because of legal fees and appeals, etc., than life in prison. But there will be a talk this Monday, 11/10, from 7-8:30pm at the Harper Center at Creighton University, 602 N. 20th St. The Keynote address is by Frank Thompson, who was the Superintendent of Oregon State Penitentiary where he oversaw two executions. Tickets are \$40 unless you are on a fixed income or a student, then they are \$25. You can get more info or tickets at www.nadp.net or 402 477-7787.

I am still taking input on the stained-glass window project. I am hoping to set up a visit of the churches next month so people can go and look at them in their original habitat. Since it is getting dark so soon it will have to be a Saturday or Sunday afternoon. I will be setting a day up with the pastors down there. One of the reasons this is important to me is that I was the pastor at St. Richard Parish when it closed. It was very important to me that the beautiful windows, etc. from that church found a good home. I knew how important they were to the people of that parish. That is the reason that I want to make sure that I do not step on the toes of anyone who has donated to the beauty of SEAS as we look into this project.

God bless you all,
Fr. Frank