

Jan. 16/17, 2016

Thoughts from the pastor,

January is always an exciting month. I keep track of cold weather by monitoring how short the days are. December 22 was the shortest day of the year. Since that was about eighteen days ago, we have already dealt with seven weeks of the darkest days of the year. This is important to me because I always seem to be cold, so it is not just the cold that drives me crazy but the short days. Right now I am looking forward to forty-five weeks of days with more daylight than we have just experienced. That plus Jesus makes things better.

January is also Pro-Life month. I wrote a little about that last week. As Catholics we are called upon to make a difference in this area. The culture of death is a force propelled by the devil that can make every day seem dark. But we have to fight it so it doesn't take over our part of the world and our time in history.

One of the other things that happens is the celebration of Catholic Schools and Catholic Education. As you will notice, Catholic Schools Weeks starts January 31st. There are all sorts of events happening to focus on this part of our Catholic culture and actually our Catholic duty. For one of the precepts of the Church is to pass on the faith to the next generation. The way it is worded is: "To study Catholic teaching in preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, to be confirmed, and then to continue to study and advance the cause of Christ." So once we have gotten a good start on our own faith journey by reaching Confirmation, we then take on the duty to pass that on to others, especially the next generation.

Obviously I get to do a lot of that. I occasionally get to do tours for the smallest students of our parish. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd meet on the weekends. I also go into the 3rd and 8th grade classrooms at S.J.S. School almost every week and have Mass with all the students at least every month. This past week I had a wonderful session with the 6th, 7th, & 8th grade P.R.E. students. We have got some very sharp students in those groups. As I do that I am always looking for talent because I know that some of them might end up being the next priests and Sisters that will be teaching the faith. I also spent much of the Advent season with the local Catholic high school students talking with them as I heard confessions. The next round of that will start in about six weeks. Lent is coming up very soon. I also get to participate in our Youth Group activities occasionally. They are getting ready for their spring retreat on Saturday March 5th.

Next weekend I have invited Alex Pandolfo to speak at the Masses after the Gospel is read. He and his family have been at SEAS for about six months. He is the new FOCUS Team Directory at U.N.L. This FOCUS team does the Catholic evangelizing at the university education level and will be greatly helped with the new John Paul II Newman Center that the Archdiocese is building across the street from where the old Venice Inn operated.

There is also a new setup for you and/or your family to work on reinforcing your Catholic faith at home. If you find formed.org on your computer you can watch Catholic programs, movies, etc. on your time schedule. The parish has a license for this usage through the month of April. When you try to use it you will find a place for entering our parish code. The code is: 67e4f3. Then you will need to setup your own user name and password. If this works out for people we can renew it. There are some great movies to watch on this site and the education programs are some of the best. This is important because Jesus said that we are the "light of the world". That is hard if you don't have the training to be bright. And if all of that isn't enough come next Sunday between the morning Masses and I will have a presentation at 9:30 on some aspects of the Church in Vietnam.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank