

May 14-15, 2016

Thoughts from the pastors,

This has been a very exciting week. The biggest news for many of you was the hail storm that hit SEAS and St. James Parish areas. I feel sorry for all of you who did a lot of work to put in flowers and now have to replant. I hope the trees can recover. I haven't heard about other damages to property but I am sure that many of you are trying to fix windows, roofs, and gutters, etc. I have been taught to always look for something good within each event in our lives. One good was that many of the church and rectory windows got power washed with the rain and hail. I am hoping that the interesting weeds that were growing on the embankment behind the church were killed off by the hail before they had time to form seeds. It is probably wishful thinking but I hope this slowed them down. There has been a lot of iced lettuce for the rabbits to eat around the parish where the hail drifted or was moved by the city trucks. I just don't know if rabbits like tree leaves on ice.

The day of the storm I had a little more excitement. I happened to be in the Credit Union when it got robbed on Wednesday. If you watch it on youtube, I am the blurred out person on the left. I was hoping to talk the guy out of doing anything stupid so I am almost ashamed to say that I didn't even think to say an Act of Contrition. I told him that I was a priest and would have helped him out rather than robbing the place. He wasn't interested.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiRkZ5VVpm4&feature=youtu.be>

Later that afternoon I was walking around the neighborhood and slipped on some mud. After I got cleaned up I went to St. Stephen the Martyr's for my nephew's Confirmation. I had one of the priests hear my confession. It seemed like there might be a demon following me around that day and I wanted to get rid of it. I hope it worked. It was a good confession and I haven't had any thing crazy happen since.

This is Seminarian Conor Bopp's last full week with us. A week from Tuesday, 5/24, he heads out for a couple days off and then will start his summer participation at the Institute for Priestly Formation at Creighton. He has been a great blessing for the parish and I hope we have been helpful in his formation. He has had a lot of great experiences. He worked with some of you to get a refugee family settled in Omaha. He has been doing Communion Services, helping with funerals, teaching P.R.E., working with Kindergarten, 1st and 5th graders at St. James/Seton, teaching a class on Social Encyclicals on Sunday mornings, helping me with nursing home Masses, of course pulling weeds and taking out trees, and a lot of other things.

This coming weekend the Vocation Committee will have a couple posters in the narthex that you can write a note and/or sign. They will also have a basket for personal cards for those of you who would like to put one together. These will be given to him at a little reception after the 5:30pm Sunday Mass on 5/22. He has been very helpful with the youth group so we wanted to make sure that they would have a chance to say goodbye. Shortly after he moves out, Patrick Moser will be moving in to spend the summer at SEAS.

The next three weekends the Church celebrates some very powerful feasts that help us focus our faith. This weekend it celebrates the Feast of Pentecost. Then is the Feast of the Most Holy

Trinity, and then the Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ or Corpus Christi. Each of these is a mystery to unpack by our study and prayer. As a part of that I would like to invite you to participate in another book sharing weekend. I would like to do that in two week, May 28-29. If you have any spiritual books that you have read and wouldn't mind passing on so someone else can read them, please bring them in the next two weeks to the offices or set them next to the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry drop boxes just outside the cry room. I will sort them out and have a table or two with them displayed on that weekend. It is a great way to have something powerful to read for the summer. More and more I am finding that the books on my shelf do very little besides collect dust. I would rather have them in people's hands. If you have spiritual videos sitting around, bring those also. We have some of those available to borrow as you enter the chapel, but they tend to go fast.

One of the books that I have been reading lately is: The Protestant's Dilemma, by Devon Rose. It looks at what is happening with many of our brothers and sisters in Christ who are part of the many Protestant denominations. Since they broke off from the Catholic Church they have been finding some things out that aren't so good. The main one is that if they think that it is good to break off from the church, because they disagree with a particular teaching, it works for everyone else in the same way. But what is happening now is that people aren't just starting new denominations. They are becoming their own private denomination or even their own god. You have heard me mention that famous line from TV and movies before: "I am a spiritual person but I don't believe in that organized religion stuff."

Another book I have been reading is Five Years in Heaven: The unlikely Friendship That Answered Life's Greatest Questions. This one is about a young man who meets an elderly nun, who helps him understand the many ways that God is working in his life that he had not recognized. Reading this book is like listening in on a person's conversations with a Spiritual Director.

These are just a couple ideas for growing in your faith. I also highly recommend the www.discerninghearts.com website. One of the parts of this that I really enjoy is Omaha's own, Kris McGregor, who does a podcast called Inside the Pages. She interviews a bunch of great authors about their best books. There is also many other great features on that website. Many of you have heard Kris on KVSS. I hope all of you have your radios set to 102.7 FM. Many of you do not have cable. Besides the savings you are also saving your children and yourselves from a lot of really bad stuff. But I hope you realize that you can watch EWTN TV live online. There are so many good shows. Also don't forget formed.org. You will need our parish code of 67e4f3 to log in but it has great things to hook into. That is actually one of the projects that I hope to get Patrick Moser doing this summer. I want him to learn how to guide education through the internet and these wonderful programs on it.

Last but not least you are certainly invited to come to the Cathedral on Friday, 5/27, at 7pm for the ordination of Nicholas Mishek. There are only two being ordained so there should be plenty seats. The priesthood ordination on Saturday, 6/4, is for six young men and so may be more crowded. Ordinations are an amazing experience.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank