

Sept. 10-11, 2016

Thoughts from the pastor,

I emailed many of you the last couple weeks. The first one was about the parish picnic and that I would be gone the rest of that week for my annual retreat. The second one was regarding the budget. If you are not getting those emails it is because you are not registered in the parish or we do not have a correct email for you. You can fix that through the parish office.

We do not have the final tally on the picnic but I will keep you apprized on that. The retreat went very well. Most of the time I go on retreat with a couple dozen other priests who gather at St. Benedict's Center in Schuyler, NE. We have a retreat director that is organized for us. This year I was not able to do that with the group because it was set up on the same week as Totus Tuus. But the blessing of having Fr. Mario around that week was that he was able to take my Masses so I went out to Schuyler but I was on my own. Three fourths of the time I was one of two retreatants out there. I had a wing of the retreat center to myself. I was able to read, write, pray, attend Mass, and do my spiritual exercises. Many people love the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. I have a different version.

The retreat center has a small pond surrounded by a sidewalk. I love walking and saying the rosary. Each day I would walk three miles and pray four rosaries. Then I would spend almost another hour weeding the cracks in the sidewalk and their flowerbeds. They keep the place up very well but I like to give them a hand. It makes for great reminders. One lesson is that, like weeds, there is always going to be sin in the world so the work I do as a priest will never be done. Another lesson is that, like weeds, sin takes root almost anywhere. Virtue, like flowers, take better conditions and more care. And I learned from my Dad that it is always far easier to uproot flowers than to uproot weeds. Like weeds, vices can grow back bigger and stronger if you don't keep on top of the problem. If you work on a flower bed and fill it with flowers, you will have less work weeding that area. But if you have no flowers, it will fill up very quickly with all sorts of weeds. Virtues and vices work the same way. That is why I enjoy this particular kind of spiritual exercise. It works especially well in conjunction with the rosary.

All of this reminds me of the battle that many of us are having with the Omaha Public School District. Their comprehensive sex education program is horrible. You are encouraged to opt your child out of these Human Growth and Development Classes. The curriculum presents unnecessary and sexually explicit content about many forms of sexual activity which endanger children's health (and their souls) through increased promiscuity, child pregnancies, STDs, abortions, gender confusion, depression, and anxiety. This program undermines the child/parent relationship and violates parent rights by placing the teacher as the authority in matters of sexual education. You can get the opt-out forms in the church narthex or on the bulletin board near the chapel entrance. You can also get more information or download the forms on www.savenebraskachildren.com. You also have until September 20 for public comment. I encourage this but realize that the OPS board seems very determined to force this on our children.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank