

Dec. 30-31, 2017

Thoughts from the pastor,

Happy New Year! May it be filled with many blessings for you and your family.

Just some reminders at first. Bible Study will meet again next Sunday, 1/7, and the readings for that day will be day 92. We will be going over days 85-91. That day will also be our celebration of our patron saint, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton whose feast is actually Jan.4<sup>th</sup>. There will be Rocky & Bullwinkle cartoons showing in the afternoon from 3-5pm. You can come and enjoy Rocky, Dudley Do-Right, Fractured Fairy Tales, or Mr. Peabody and Sherman. I will have a couple TVs going so different age groups can gather. There will be juice and popcorn. Then we will have a celebration of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton at the 5:30 Sunday Mass. This will be followed by Pizza and games after Mass. Bring your favorite game and mix and match with members of other families to make new friends with people who also like your favorite game. It is only \$1 for the popcorn afternoon and \$5 for pizza night. This is per person or \$20 per family for any and all of it. Obviously any other donations are welcome.

There is no news on my book this week, but I thought I might offer some thoughts for the new year that come to me in conjunction with the book. We have football coaches and soccer coaches but very few people have prayer coaches. We have learned prayers and are told to pray but for many people it can be frustrating for it seems as if it gets us nowhere. Some people conclude from this experience that there is no God. That would be like saying, that if kicking a football a couple times and not being picked to play in any big games, there really is no such thing as football.

There is plenty of experience that lets us know that God is real. Billions of people who trust in him and a good percentage of those have felt a real connection with him, should be enough evidence for most of us. But to get to know him is a process just like learning to play football. Just kicking a football around is actually helpful. It gives you a chance to learn how it flies and how it bounces. We find out that they are trickier than a soccer ball.

By saying simple prayers like the Hail Mary or the Our Father we get a feel for what it is like to present ourselves before God. After a few times we learn how easily we get distracted. I'm pretty sure that was one of the reasons Mary gave us the rosary. She knew she had a lot of spiritual children with short attention spans. But there are times when we need short, focused prayers. One that I have been teaching people recently is helpful when we are faced with a temptation. Temptations come into our minds very quickly and the faster we can refocus the better off we are. So the prayer that I have come up with is: "Lord I want to be a Saint, help me not to sin now."

That short line refocuses a person back on God instead of the path of the devil. It lets God know that you need his help and cannot fight the devil with your own strength. After a couple of uses it comes to mind almost as quickly as the temptation which is efficient. I do suggest that people thank God at the end of the day for the many times he helped in those little battles with the bad guy. This is a simple coaching technique that can make one aspect of prayer more fruitful. Over the next few weeks I will be adding a few more. Stay tuned.

God bless you,  
Fr. Frank