

Mar. 18-19, 2017

Thoughts from the pastor,

We just finished the parish mission with Fr. Dave Belt. From the comments I gather that it was greatly appreciated. I have a special connection with his way of thinking because he also comes for rural Nebraska and has five brothers just like me.

In one of his presentations he was talking about one of his images of people attending Mass. He said that most people seem to come to church as if it was like a cruise ship. You come in expecting to be treated like a guest. Things will be taken care of for you. The captain/priest and his crew will handle things and all that is expected of you is to show up. My mind immediately added a few things. Most people know that it is not a free trip so they donate to help with the costs but if the entertainment is not up to their standards they want to find another cruise ship/church.

Then Fr. Belt showed that the church should be more like a battleship. In that model everyone is playing an important role in being battle ready. There are no passengers. Again, my mind immediately added a few things, but this time it was even more imaginative. I pictured the Starship Enterprise. I thought of the opening line of the original series: "Space: the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship *Enterprise*. Its five-year mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before." This comes closer to the idea of the Church than a regular battleship. Heaven: the absolute final frontier. This is the reason for the trips to the Catholic Church. Its life-long mission: to explore the mystery of God, to seek out the lost and forsaken, to protect new life, to boldly follow Christ as the Way, Truth, and Life; as He leads us to our new home.

Just like the *Enterprise*, we still need to be battle ready. Like them our weapons are to protect, not to destroy. We do not have photon torpedoes, or phasers. We do have Christ's hosts of angels, the power of God in the sacraments, and even hand weapons like the rosary and other sacramentals. We do not have star charts but we have the Word of God to direct us. As Fr. Belt pointed out, we are not just passengers, but crew members. This is because our individual salvation is at stake. We are to be battle ready explorers of this strange new world. Each of us might have a different set of duties, but each of us must be active in our goal of salvation or we might not survive the attacks of the enemy.

That is what happens when I participate in a parish mission. My mind is always looking for a way to better understand the journey we are on. How did your mind work?

You are invited to attend a screening and panel discussion of the film: HUSH, One woman investigates the untold effects of abortion on women's health. This will be held at the Milo Bail Student Center Dodge Room at UNO, on Mar. 30, 2017, from 5:30-8:30pm. You can look on Facebook at: [fb.com/hushdoc](https://www.facebook.com/hushdoc), or on Twitter at: [@hush_film](https://twitter.com/hush_film).

God bless you,
Fr. Frank