

May 20-21, 2017

Thoughts from the pastor,

Last week I was sharing some reflections on why people have joined the church in the early days of its existence. Over the centuries there have been many other different reasons for people wanting to follow Christ. One of these comes from the line in scripture, "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (Jn.13:35) There were many times, especially in the Middle Ages, that there were plagues and other horrible health epidemics. History shows that during those times, many of the doctors left town. They were usually a little more well off, and as a way of watching out for their family, they did what they needed to do to avoid the problem.

So caring for the sick came down to two groups, the clergy and the other Christians. The scriptures guided them in these trying times but their actions proved their faith. The clergy saw the people in need as their family even though the word they used was probably flock. The Church's list of Saints include many who fit this category long before St. Theresa of Calcutta accepted her vocation. Women religious were a part of the other support group for the sick. Many people lived out their faith by coming to help those in need because of faith in Christ and His promise of an eternal reward in heaven. Some from royal families gave everything they had to help the cause and many joined religious orders or started one of their own. By the way that is how the first hospitals got started. Catholics made hospitals and health care a reality.

Many of the poor in the area joined in the efforts. They didn't have the means to move out of the area like the doctors but they could have avoided participating and hid in their homes. Christians knew each other too well for that to be the case. Their church congregations became their families. To ignore a family member in need would have been unthinkable in that situation, but they didn't stop with fellow Christians. They helped everyone they could.

This example of love of neighbor was what God used to evangelize. Outsiders wanted to become a part of one of these families. Having grown up in a small town environment I experienced a version of this culture. It strengthened me so that leaving home at 13 to enter the seminary didn't create as much separation anxiety as it would have for some others. I wasn't leaving everything I knew. I was simply going to a different version of it. It was still the church. Any struggle that I faced in the seminary was still something that I felt was a part of family life, not perfect, but what was right and needed.

For this reason, over the summer I am hoping to do little things during Mass that will build family at SEAS. Last week we did one of the many things that has made us a family already, we had the children help bless the mothers, on Mother's Day. I will be working on a few other ideas over the next few months. Stay tuned.

After tallying the funds we have raised to this point for stained glass windows, I am happy to say that we have enough to put in four more. We finished off what was needed for the Ascension window that will go next to the Resurrection window. We had a family donate a memorial to put in the Good Shepherd window behind the HOPE table. The Sheik family donated what was needed to put the Baptism of the Lord window next to the reconciliation room I use. And we have enough to put the St. Paul window in the parish hall entrance. Except for the last one the only thing holding up the process is the wood framing. Hopefully that will be done soon. Then we will just have three more windows to go of the ten we got from St. Patrick's Church. Thanks to all who helped to make this possible.

God bless you,  
Fr. Frank