

Jan. 27-28, 2018

Thoughts from the pastor,

You missed out on a letter last week because I was at Mundelein Seminary north of Chicago for class. It was an exciting drive to get there. The snowfall that was not supposed to go east of the Missouri River was making the road conditions exciting all the way past Des Moines. Then there was a brief clear area west of Des Moines before the stretch of ice as I got closer to Illinois. There were a lot of cars and one ambulance in the ditches. The ambulance was upside down. Once I got into Illinois it was snowing the rest of the way. According to my weather app, that was supposed to be clear sailing. They must have meant ice-sailing. It snowed in the Chicago area from Sunday afternoon until Tuesday noon. I was so lucky to be able to be there and experience it. Just like I was so lucky and get back for the blizzard in Omaha early this week. Poor Fr. Don, he missed them both. He stayed here last week and was gone this past week.

Chicago had four to five inches of snow but no wind. I am happy to say that the rooms at the seminary were nice and toasty so I only had to suffer going from building to building. I keep learning more and more. Someday I will be as smart as all the other priests.

Before we run out of January I want to thank everyone, because our Christmas collection was \$5,000 over what we had budgeted. It makes my job so much easier when paying bills is not a day-by-day worry. That is why I try to be generous whenever I can to those in need. There are so many who have to worry about making ends meet.

One of the worries that people have brought up to me is a concern about the flu season. Because there is an especially nasty version of it going around at this time I would like to make a suggestion. For the foreseeable future it seems like a good idea to alter the Sign of Peace at Mass. Shaking hands is not a good idea at this time. Choose an alternative instead. For some of you it might be a good idea to simply cross your arms across your chest, like you would if you were going up to receive a blessing at Communion time; and then nod your head to each other. Another possibility is to do the sign of peace like the priests and deacons do occasionally, which is to touch each other's shoulder and nod your heads next to each other. Butting heads is not a good way to express a sign of peace so you have to be cautious with that one. I will be using another suggestion in the back of church after Mass. I will be bumping elbows. I happen to think that it is way more fun.

My spiritual tip for this week is to get into the mind of Jesus as you try to overcome the sin of objectifying others. He did not look at people as sexual objects. He sees us as children of the Father who have a tremendous dignity to live out. He wants each of us to be our best and even when we are sinners, He is hoping we can follow Him to a better life. He would never look at one of us with lust.

This week is Catholic School's Week. We celebrate what we are doing in having this amazing system of education for our young people that helps them form their minds, hearts, and souls. It is a good week to pray for the people who work in them.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank