

Oct. 14, 2018

Thoughts from the pastor,

It feels like a line from the old Poltergeist movie; “He’s back!” It has been a month since my last letter. I have to say that it was wonderful having a chance to get away for a while. I realize that some of you don’t get that kind of opportunity. I remember the days when having a few days off were all I could afford and all that I needed to be renewed. That was when I was young and my mind was emptier. Now it is full and I occasionally need time to sort out the files that are all jumbled in there.

The first part of the trip was a two week cruise for which I was the priest chaplain. Holland America and Viking still have priests on all their cruises. I was able to say Mass every day for about 6 – 10 people. I had weekend Masses for about 60 – 70 Catholics. Most of the days the ship was fairly stable so it was easy. We only had one day with a rock & roll Mass. I got to see places like Amsterdam, Antwerp, a few stops in northern France, Gibraltar, Cartagena Spain, and in the middle of those was Lisbon, Portugal. It was that last one that gave me a chance to go on a bus with a group from the ship to visit Fatima. That was wonderful because there were just a few hundred people at the shrine. Considering they had over 8,000,000 when the pope was there last year, that was peaceful. It was like having the place to myself and gave me time to pray to Mary for all of you.

When the boat docked near Rome I took the bus to the airport and got to my retreat at Mundelein Seminary, north of Chicago. That was also very peaceful. I used the time to do a lot of praying and reading. I walked between 9 and 10 miles per day. I tried to eat less than 1500 calories per day. So the good news is that I was able to lose seven pounds. So that part of my goal was successful. The books I read were: Forty Reasons I am a Catholic, by Peter Kreeft; Church of Spies, by Mark Riebling; and Heroism and Genius, by William J. Slattery. The first is a quick read from convert to Catholicism who is now one of the most prolific writers about the teaching of the church, mostly from a philosophical background. The second is the story of the work of the Catholic Church in fighting Hitler and the Nazis during WWII. The subtitle to the third one gives its explanation: “How Catholic Priests helped build-and can help rebuild-western civilization.” That was an important one for me to read as all the problems with clerical scandals come out.

As I got back Fr. Don decided to take some time off also, so he will be leaving me on my own for an unknown period of time. He probably figures that if I can take three weeks off, a retired priest should be able to do something like that also.

We now have a new cleaning crew. Ruth Rogel is in charge of the crew which includes her sister, and her mother. They have been at it for a month now and it seems to be a good fit for them and for the parish. Ruth does cleaning as her business and lives right in the neighborhood. I also want to thank the Durr family for handling the job for the last year.

This week we have olive wood articles for sale in the narthex. You will also notice that Sister Irene, from the Philippines is back in the Omaha area for a visit and will be selling religious articles at the Masses in two weeks, 10/27-28. She was here a year ago and helped with Totus Tuus that summer. Her religious order of Consecrated Women work to rescue women and children from prostitution and human trafficking in the Philippines.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank