

Dec. 16, 2018

Thoughts from the pastor,

Now we are down to the last week before Christmas. Don't be fooled by the fact that this is Gaudete (Joy) Sunday or the Third Sunday of Advent. That Fourth week of Advent is a mere puff of smoke this year. That means that now is the time for getting to Confession if you haven't had a chance recently. The SEAS Penance Service is this Monday, 12/17, at 7pm. There will be nine priests here hearing confessions from 7:15pm to 8:15pm or longer. That depends on how wise all of you are. As I told the children at Mass at SJS this past week and at PRE last Wednesday, our mothers expect us to wash our hands before coming to the table and eat. God has the same expectations for coming to the banquet of His Son. Then the farmer in me got carried away and I reminded them that pigs don't wash up before eating. After all, they are pigs.

You might have noticed that we are having some work done on the roof over the Parish Hall. We are only doing the Parish Hall part because of budget constraints and because the flat roof over the church is not quite as bad at this point. This work should be done very quickly, which is good because we are getting a lot of snow melt in the office area. Having 40 degree temperature is helpful for this project. I also ordered the two air-conditioning units which will cost us \$72,000. We have just enough in our funds and reserves to take care of these two projects. Just pray that nothing else comes up any time soon.

In another bit of news we have another concert coming up. The Santos family has agreed to do one more concert before they move to Sioux City. This concert will be on January 6th at 1pm. The plan is to have pizza after the 11am Mass to start the celebration of our patron, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton. Then we will have the one hour concert and go back to the Parish Hall for more activities until about 4pm. There will be more news on this in the next few weeks. Please mark it on your calendars. This means there won't be *Rocky & Bullwinkle* cartoons this year.

I also want to make sure that all of you understand the Mass schedule at this point and what it will be in 2019. Most important there will be no changes to the weekend Mass schedule. There is still an 8:30am and 5:30pm Mass on Saturdays. There will still be an 8am, 11am, & 5:30pm Mass on Sundays. I will still be there hearing confessions a half hour before each of those Masses. For these next two weeks there is still a Communion Service on Monday mornings at 7am. There are still Confessions at 6:30am and Mass at 7:00am on Wednesdays and Fridays. There are still confessions at 5pm and Mass at 5:30pm Monday through Thursday.

There will be additional changes starting Dec. 31. From that day on there will be no weekday morning services, but I will add a 5:30pm Mass with confessions. So the only weekday confessions in 2019 will be from 5-5:25pm M-F, and Masses at 5:30pm M-F. Again the weekends will stay as they have been for the last 3 years. The only weekday morning Mass as of 2019 would be on a Holy Day. I wish this wasn't the case but I also wish more young people would be ready to serve the Lord as priests or go into Consecrated Life. Over the next few months I will be giving you an idea of what kind of changes could be happening in the rural areas of our Archdiocese because of the priest shortage. Please pray for our priests and pray for vocations.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank