

July 22, 2018

Thoughts from the pastor,

This week is Totus Tuus so there will be a lot of activity here at SEAS. If you haven't registered your child, this weekend is your last chance. We also have an announcement about the UNO Newman Center. They will be going through a transition this year. The Archdiocese just announced that the pastor of the John Paul II Newman Center, Fr. Joe Taphorn, has just been appointed as the new rector of St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, MN. I happen to think that this is another Fr. Joe, that is bishop material (like Fr. Joe Hanefeldt) and that this is one step closer for him. The announcement from the Archdiocese said that there would be a priest from St. Paul at the Newman Center this next year to help with that transition.

I am happy to report that Fr. Mike Malloy is recovering very well in Battle Creek. He thinks he might be able to do Masses within a couple weeks. He might still be using a walker for a while but he has had Masses like that before.

While I was on that wonderful vacation I took the opportunity to visit several of the churches in Boston. They do have some beautiful ones. I enjoy attending Masses while on vacation because I don't have to worry about anything. I don't have to prepare a homily or worry about everything and everyone being in the right place at the right time. Most of my nightmares are actually about everything going wrong at Mass. Yes, I still have nightmares. But on vacation the pressure is off. But that doesn't solve all the problems.

That is when I start getting critical of each priest. I start thinking things like: I would never have said anything like that in my homily. I can't believe he rushes through that part of the Mass like that. Why does he have to change those perfectly good prayers that the Church has written? Why is he emphasizing that silly point? Those kinds of thoughts go through my head all through the Mass I am attending. Certainly that never happens while you attend Mass! But if it does, you are not alone. It is not like I am going to corner the priest to criticize him after a Mass, when I have seen him only once while on vacation; although I have thought of doing that.

I have to go through all my "thought clearing" methods. First and foremost I have to remember that God doesn't pick perfect people to be the priests that will act for His Son in His Church. I know that because there aren't any. Then I have to remember how hard it is for me to keep my nightmares from happening and things not going just how I hoped, or maybe what I said didn't come out how I wanted it to. I also have to remember all the stages of ignorance or misguided ways that I went through over the years. After 40 years of priesthood I think that I should be perfected by now, but I know that the reality is that I probably drive more people crazy now than ever before.

After all those thoughts I have to try and think about what gifts and talents that priest might have that God noticed as a reason to call him to priestly service. I then think of all the people whose lives he touched. One of the priests I met in Boston had been a priest for over 50 years. The amount of good he has probably done in those decades is hard to imagine. When I start thinking about those things my mind clears and I thank God for how He works through His priests, even me. I also thank God for all the patient people who attend Mass every day and every week. As we try to promote vocations during this priest shortage, we don't have to speak as if priests are perfect. We simply have to realize that they are human and that while we see the negatives in each one, we also see their gifts.

For those of you who are keeping track, Fr. Don is in Boyd County this weekend and will be in North Bend and Snyder next weekend.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank