

Aug. 26, 2018

Thoughts from the pastor,

It's Picnic Weekend! This is our main parish party. I sure hope you can come and be a part of it. Over my 40 years of my priesthood I have heard people say that Catholics are not welcoming. They come to Mass and no one focuses on them. Since our main focus should be on Jesus that can sure happen but we should always try to continue to be a part of the SEAS tradition of being a warm and welcoming parish. But it is here at the picnic that we have the chance to really shine as a warm parish. This year should be wonderful in that respect. The new parking lot surface should really amplify the 90 degree heat that is expected to be the high for the day. But in case you are afraid that way of being welcomed might be too warm, you should know that the air-conditioners are working in the building and the soccer field has room for a lot of canopies and that there are shade trees. Fr. Don and I will be watching for you.

I spent most of this past Monday and the first half of Tuesday at a Priest's Council meeting with the Archbishop. Obviously one of the biggest things on his mind and on the minds of the 15 priests in attendance was the scandals that the Catholic Church is facing. The ones in Pennsylvania are ones from the past that were never reported when other dioceses were trying to work with this mess of sin. The Lincoln diocese has an old one coming up and news ones that are being dealt with. But the worst ones are the Cardinals that are in trouble. The only level higher that could make it worse would be the pope himself. The Archbishop spent time with us at this Priest's Council meeting to draft a letter and to prepare to give further information that would be helpful for all of us.

He has a lot to share on this subject that couldn't come out in a one page letter. Remember he was a bishop in another diocese before he came to Omaha. He has had to help deal with these kinds of scandals in both. Not all of the misbehavior of clergy has been in terms of abuse of children. There have been inappropriate relationships with adults, misuse of funds, and more. Each one of these creates a wound that needs to be healed. Many of these others are well-known to people in the parishes or institutions in which they happened but were never reported beyond that. Many of them happened before most of us were old enough to be aware of the flaws that priests, bishops, and Cardinals might have. I still believe it is important to keep a place for that innocence for our children. That is why I deal with most of these issues in my letters and not in homilies. For that reason if you ever hear of someone who wonders why I don't deal with these issues publically and stand up for these important things, please remind them to read my letters. We all should be reading to help understand issues like this more fully, rather than just skim the surface and make rash judgments.

If we knew our church history we would know that these things are not new. Many of our Saints made the renewal of the clergy their main mission. There has never been a time in the church in which there haven't been problems. That is one of the ways that God gives His Saints work to do. He allows the devil to work in our world in order for us to have a chance to prove ourselves one way or another. We show God that we are for Him and His Kingdom or we don't. In heaven we won't have to work so hard for there won't be any sinners around. But in this life everyone has sinners for neighbors, including my neighbors, because I am no Saint yet.

But the sins of this era are our test to prove ourselves. It is a tough battle and there are many people who are wounded and need our help to heal. Maybe a picnic will be a start. Laughter can still be good medicine.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank