

Jerry's Journal



Many thanks to all who pledged and/or contributed to the 2018 Catholic Services Appeal. We have made our target goal assigned to us by the Archdiocese of Detroit. Any pledges over and above our target goal will go directly to our parish savings account.

I am planning, in late October, to give a financial state of the parish report. The report will spell out how much money we have in savings and go into detail on some necessary work we are doing related to the repair of a portion of the roofs in the social hall, replacement of a portion of the HVAC system, and an update on our sound system.

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Please note the new parish weekday office hours which went into effect on Tuesday, September 4, 2018. The parish office is open from 8:30 am to 8:00 pm Monday through Thursday. **The parish office is closed all day on Friday.** Weekend office hours remain the same. On Saturdays the parish office opens at 2:30 pm and closes at 5:30 pm. On Sundays the parish office opens at 7:30 am and closes at 1 pm.

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“Are you happy?” How would you honestly answer that question? My suspicion is that, for most of us, this would be a painful question which, given our fantasy of what happiness should be, would tend to answer in the negative “No, I am not happy. I would like to be, but there are too many limitations and frustrations in my life which block my road to happiness.”

“Are you happy?” To stare that question square in the face can, in and of itself, make you unhappy. Perhaps it would lead to a torturous self-examination as to what is preventing you from being happy. What this suggests is that perhaps the question of “Are you happy?” is not a very good question. Maybe it is confusing or annoying because the only way we can be happy is if all our demands for happiness are met.

For someone who is a disciple of Christ the essential question should not be “Am I happy?” but rather, “Is my life meaningful?” That is a question which can serve to purify our perspective.

What God has promised us in Christ is not, as is unfortunately so often preached and believed, a life free from pain, sickness, loneliness, oppression, and eternal death. Anyone who tells you that you will have less pain in life if you take Christ seriously is not in touch with the gospel. What the incarnation (Jesus taking on human flesh) promises is not that the Lord will take away our pain, but that God will be with us in that pain. If you take the gospel seriously, you will probably have more pain in your life because you will be more conscious of the pain in the world.

To take the gospel seriously is not to be given immunity from the human condition. For a person of faith there will still be the same sickness, the same cold lonely seasons, the same frustrations, the same regrets and bitter losses. Just like a person who does not believe in God, people of faith have to face pain and death. Faith does not offer us a

life free of pain. What God does promise is to be with us in that pain. That is why our Savior's name is Emmanuel, a name which means **God-is-with-us**.

The important question then is not "Am I happy?" but rather "Is my life meaningful?" By asking the latter question, instead of the former one, there is less of a chance of torturing one's self with some unattainable, romantic ideal. More importantly, we avoid the temptation of asking God to exempt us from the human condition. Life is meaningful when we sense God's presence amid our suffering, sickness, loneliness, and pain. Faith should never lead us to pressure God to ask for something that even Jesus was not exempt from. Why should we be spared from something that not even the Son of God was granted such immunity?

"Is my life meaningful?" When the question is asked in this way, the perspective is very different. Now happiness is no longer dependent on not getting sick, lonely, or misunderstood. Life can be both frustrating and meaningful. It is possible to stare old age, pain, and even death right in the face and still experience deep meaning and happiness as a result of a life well lived. If we can sense that God was with us in sickness and in health, joy and sorrow, success and failure, youth and old age, then life has meaning and will, ultimately, lead to a happiness which goes beyond mere human expectations.

Fr Jerry Slowinski

"Marc" My Words



I usually focus on the Gospel reading for the subject matter of my article. I thought that I would deviate from that pattern and look more deeply at the epistle, the reading from the Letter of Saint James. I thought that it would be good, my brothers and sisters in Christ, to write about what it means to be a Catholic in this time and place. There are many things happening in our nation, Church, and parish.



First and foremost our faith, and practice of it, should not be based on what others do or don't do. Yes they should be held accountable and will be. Our faith is based on God's love for us, especially in the person of Jesus who took on our flesh, then suffered and died for our sins. He then rose from the dead in order that we may be redeemed. We, despite any rough roads, must keep the faith and follow that up with works. St. James tells us, "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?...So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead...Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works."

Jesus, in today's Gospel, tells us that we must deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and follow him. That sure does sound like work to me! With everything going on around us

we have three choices. We can run from the Church and our faith. When the going and message got tough Jesus asked his disciples, “Are you going to leave me too?” What is your answer? Mine is, “As for me and my household we will serve the Lord.” I can’t give up on Jesus, my faith or my Church because of the criminal actions of others. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. He supplies us grace through the Holy Spirit using the Church as a conduit of grace and sacraments so that we have the fullness of the truth and grace to get us through the tough times. We see this most distinctly in the Eucharist, as well as the six other sacraments. These sacraments are gifts from God. Will you refuse to accept them?

We all must play a part in sharing our faith with others through our works so that faith is not dead. We must help those in need. We must be a voice for the voiceless and the most vulnerable of society. We must stand firm in the face of adversity, trial, and tribulation. We must remain vigilant and be like a neighborhood watch looking out for our brothers and sisters in Christ. When we keep informed and keep the faith we can remain formed and conformed to Christ. It is only through Jesus and our faith that we can truly experience how God works in our lives. It is through the sacraments, our faith, and our works that we remain in God’s...

Peace, Love, and Blessings,

Deacon Marc

