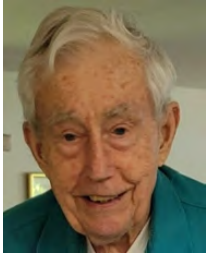


THE PASTOR'S POST

SEASON OF CREATION

Dear Parish Family:



I write today after returning from my former parish to celebrate the funeral of John Grammas, a very good and holy man. He died at age 99 and was active close to the end of his life on earth. He married his wife after only knowing her a few weeks before going off to war. When he returned, realizing

they were not able to conceive, they committed to adoption - eight times! They even adopted children who were terminally ill and committed to caring for them to the end of their days.

John was a structural engineer designing many things, even churches. When he was ill and dying and in my last months in that parish, I visited him at his house. It is no surprise that he designed it! He designed it at an earlier time in his life anticipating the challenges of old age. He also designed it in such a way that in each of the rooms you could appreciate the beautiful environment - incredible trees, plants, water, sunrises and more. In the midst of it all, he appreciated the incredible beauty of God's creation.

We are presently in the Season of Creation. Inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, the Season of Creation inspires us to be more aware of the environment and our vital role in caring for our common home. I write because I am often disappointed in myself in this area. I do not pay enough attention. I am not littering or pouring chemicals into the ocean, but I am also not taking enough responsibility in how I recycle (and fail to do so!), in my lack of awareness as to how I am contributing to the destruction of the environment, in my failure to do more to protect our common home.

It is very easy to get in a political corner when it comes to the environment. However, for Catholics, this is not a political issue in that we support a "side". It's a theological issue in that we believe the earth is a gift from God and we have responsibility to care for all the gifts God entrusts to us, in all that God has created. Last year, Pope Francis wrote, *Laudate Deum*. In this follow up to *Laudato Si'*, he concludes: "Praise God' is the title of this letter. For when human beings claim to take God's place, they become their own worst enemies" (73).

I am working through a book based on *The Spiritual Exercises* filled with reflections by Pope Francis, who is a

Jesuit and very familiar with these exercises. The first reflection question I was called to journal about was, you guessed it, creation. The author writes, "In what ways am I already aware that God speaks to me through this creation? What other ways might I be open to it?"

I think of John Grammas. He was so open to God's gift of creation. As a husband, he was so dedicated to his beloved wife, Ruth. The priest who married them in 1944 said it was too quick and the marriage would not last. I suppose he was right. It ended after 72 years :)! He was open to God's plan to adopt and raise the children entrusted to him, perhaps a different plan than they had originally hoped.

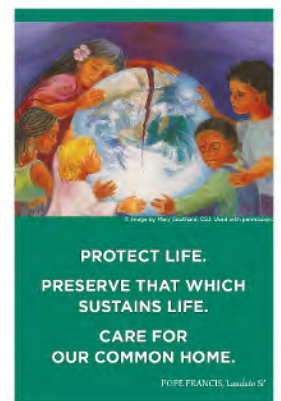
He knew about the importance of the Mass, going each day to receive the Eucharist coming from the "fruit of the earth" and the "fruit of the vine". Each day after Mass, Ruth would say to the priest, "Thank you for saying the Mass."

He tried to make sure he appreciated the beauty of God's earth in what he designed and envisioned for himself and for others throughout a long and successful career.

He knew about the gifts God gave him and was committed to sharing them with so many others.

The Season of Creation extends to October 4th, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. Can it be a time for you and me to think about some ways we might be more aware of God's gift of creation? Perhaps take some time to consider your own creation - that God has created you, specifically and especially. Let's pray for that same vision to see the presence of God in the midst of the world entrusted to us. As exhorted by St. James: "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith but does not have works" - let us get to work!

Please pray for me. I promise the same.



Father Jim