



THE PASTOR'S POST

STORAGE UNITS

Dear Parish Family:

For those who know me, I'm not a fan of the first words of the headline for this column. It is amazing to me that we have a "storage industry", an industry that is dedicated to holding on to things. I understand it. At times in our lives, we move quickly or we are holding things after the passing of a loved one or we need some time to go through things and need a space. I tend to lean on the other side of the storage debate - "Let it go", "Get a dumpster", "If you haven't used it in a year, get rid of it." and so on. There is a balance needed.

I started to realize how many things I was holding on to when I started to understand more about St. Ignatius Loyola and the work of Ignatian Spirituality. We celebrated the Feast of St. Ignatius this past Thursday. While there is much more to Ignatian Spirituality than this, St. Ignatius wrote and spoke clearly about the attachments - those things that we "hold" on to, those things that prevent us from fully attaching ourselves to God. From that point in my life, I started to be mindful of what I have and what I need and have regularly tried to make sure too many "things" don't build up. I do pretty well with this. There are too many books - in material, on devices, and on Audible. I see or read about a book and then get another one. There are a few piles that I need to work through. (I even found a book container that takes books and donates them.)

As I walk and, like all of us, can struggle in the spiritual journey, I realize again and again that the material things are the easier things to sacrifice. It's often the deeper non-material things that I struggle to be free of. Perhaps the same is true for you? That person, the past hurt, anger, the grudge, the past or ongoing sin, the relationship (ongoing or failed), and so on. These things, if I'm honest, can take up more space than any of the material things I need to go through. There are "barns" and "bigger barns" for those things if we pray with the images of the Gospel. (I have not found a donation bin for those things yet.)

So what is our response? Well, I think it is that if

we have less "stuff" - physical and otherwise - we can create more space to listen, to hear the voice of God and soften our hearts.

I think of this parish community over the past month: praying the rosary for those in fear, walking as immigrants and non immigrants in the Pilgrimage of Hope, taking time to send Seminarian Nick off well as he begins final preparations for ordination, families, individuals, and ministries coming together to make our school look better, tons of hands and hearts at summer camp, not too mention the day to day to work of consoling, comforting, caring, and challenging through prayer, liturgy, service and ministry. Giving of ourselves in ways big and small, yes doing with less so others can have a little more. Letting go of many of our attachments to be open to some things that are new, facing unique challenges with new ways of responding.

An imperfect, but possible, image that can help us is that image of a donation bin. We have a few of them on the grounds of our parish. People give what they can for the good of the other - clothes, food, sandwiches, etc. Sometimes people offer what they don't need or what is their excess or what they don't want anymore. This is true. More frequently, though, I find many treasures, many incredible offerings given for the good of the other.

So this week, let us give thanks to God for the many ways he has called us and the many ways we have responded! As you read this, perhaps there is something else that you are holding on to? If there is, I bet you are not fully free to respond to something God is asking of you here at St. Brigid's or perhaps in your own life. Is there an attachment of some kind of another that is taking up a lot of space? Better than trying to get rid of it yourself, ask God to help you be free of it. Then, ask God to help you respond!

As we pray this week, stop paying rent on the literal and spiritual storage containers instead offer yourself for the good of the other using those resources for "what matters to God" (Luke 12:21).

Please pray for me. I promise the same.

Featherman

