

From The Pastor

This past week we completed the removal of dead trees on the property and trimming the others. It has made a big difference in the appearance on both sides of the property and one that has long been needed. Last summer, we had several dead trees removed and others trimmed. The budget did not allow us to do all the work in one year. This year the project was completed with the removal of several more dead trees and the trimming of the rest.

Although expensive, this project was long overdue. By raising the level of the trees, especially on the Herbert side, we hope to minimize some of the night activity done in the back corners of the property. With the trees raised several feet, we have created a much more secure environment on the back property. Lately, there has been an increase of teen drinking, loud music, and other questionable activity on the property during the night. We have had good cooperation from the Madison Heights police in minimizing this concern, but it seems to be a favored spot for some of our younger night owls. Should you see objectionable or bad behavior on parish property do not hesitate to call the police, and/or report it to the parish office.

Raising the trees also allows more sunlight to reach the ground and stimulate the grass to grow, making the property more appealing. We are finding that several other trees are plagued with ants and other threats to their health. We are trying to be attentive to these concerns. Perhaps a tree donation program could help replace some of the old or dead trees that will be coming down in the future. If you are interested in donating a tree, or if you know a resource for tree donations, please let us know.

The Charter School is in and underway with many projects. They anticipate a full school in the fall, and are working to satisfy the code upgrades demanded by the State inspections. One of those upgrades is the replacement of the movable wall between the church and the parish hall. Discussions and designs of a two-hour fire rated wall are underway and I will share this information with you as it becomes available. Our intention is to install a wall that is similar to the one we currently have that will satisfy the fire code.

As you may have noticed, our Sunday collections have been down for several weeks. I know many are on vacation, or at cottages, but I must ask you to please be as faithful as possible with your parish giving. Some of our energy bills are less in the summer, but we have the capital expenses of maintaining both the physical buildings and the surrounding property. Thank you for your generous support. Please be faithful through the summer.

Most of us take the chance during the summer to go to an 'out of the way place to rest a while'. Although not a vacation, Jesus and the disciples try to go to an out of the way place to rest. After a successful, yet busy time of missionary activity, Jesus calls the disciples to a time of rest.

What is this 'rest' that Jesus invites them too? When we think of rest, we tend to think of a nap or a recreational activity that restores our mood and vitality. Although this is partly what Jesus has in mind, there is definitely something more. Rest is essential not only for the restoration of our bodies, but also for our minds and our souls.

Biblically, there are many implications to the word 'rest'. As early as the Book of Genesis, we are told, 'on the seventh day God rested'. This does not mean God was tired and needed a nap. It means that God ceased doing what he was doing and pondered all he had done. Rest in this scriptural sense means 'to cease doing'. Further, it implies that God pondered on what he had done and all he had accomplished. God looked at and valued, he evaluated what he had done, concluding it was 'very good'.

To rest in another sense means to surrender, to release control of life management and just be. This surrendering of control creates within a person a capacity to listen from within and ponder the meaning of all his/her busy activity. To find true rest is to be able to find meaning in our activity and set it right with our inner self. This is the mood of 'rest' that Jesus invites the disciple to take.

Jesus wants the disciples to find the inner meaning of their missionary activity. Giving them a quiet place to ponder, Jesus wants to teach them from the heart so they can find true rest in Him. More than a good nap, this rest is the energy and motivation of knowing who we are in Christ, and how we find our life activity centered in Jesus.

This does not happen because the crowd beats Jesus to his quiet place. Because Jesus knows the inner rest and peace of the Father, he is able to generously respond to the weariness of the people before him. They are seeking rest in his words of wisdom, his love and healing, and they find it there. Later, they are given bread to feed their bodies.

As the summer wears on, be sure to take some rest in the Lord. Lay down your worries and fears, and all life activity. Let the Lord speak to your heart in quiet and peace, then you will know the inner rest of Jesus himself.

Father John Esper