

## From The Pastor

As I mentioned last weekend, I am currently on my annual retreat. For the last many years, I have spent a week at the Capuchin Retreat Center in Washington Township for this time of prayer. Over the years, it has proven to be a tremendous grace to spend such time with the Lord. God always honors the time we give him. A retreat may be a very restful time of prayer and peace, yet as often as not it can also be a time of wrestling with the Lord or a 'desert' time of struggle to hear the Lord's word or direction. In any case, I am grateful for the opportunity to spend this time away for prayer. As mentioned, I will pray for you and for the parish. I depend on your prayer and support as well. I will return on Tuesday afternoon.

Beginning next weekend, Mr. Edward Miski will fill the role of Music Director. Ed had played most of our masses during the month of June. Having received several resumes and after an extensive interview we believe Ed is well suited for this position. Ed comes with several years of parish experience and is accustomed to the wide range of duties regarding liturgy and worship. Ed will be calling the choir together as we approach the fall and will also be gathering the bell choir. Please consider joining one of these groups and share your talents with the whole community.

After the first of August, Ed will begin playing for the morning mass four days a week. As such, the daily mass will be moved into the church. As a rule, the morning mass crowd is anywhere from fifteen to forty people. The morning mass group is an important part of the parish life as they hold the parish in prayer and bring Christ to the world with the blessing of daily Eucharist. I know there are a number of seniors in our area who would be richly blest through regular daily mass attendance. Consider joining us at 8:00am, Monday through Thursday for the grace and blessing of daily mass. As Ed Miski begins his new position, please show him a warm welcome.

This is also a good time to invite many others to join our Eucharistic Adoration on Mondays after Mass until Benediction at 6pm. This is a wonderful devotion of love and reverence for the powerful gift of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. We are currently struggling to have people come to fill the time from morning to evening. You don't necessarily have to stay for a whole hour. A shorter visit can do wonders to bless you with peace, and be an expression of love for the Lord. Jesus is, of course, the center of our faith, and of our lives. To take advantage of so great a blessing as Eucharistic Adoration is a powerful gift that brings Christ to our hearts and to our world. Please consider making a visit on Mondays to worship, pray and adore the Lord Jesus in our day chapel.

This Eucharistic theme is appropriate now as we begin four Sundays from chapter six of John's gospel. This is the chapter on the Bread of Life and the rich gift of Jesus in his self-giving of the Eucharist. It begins today with the feeding of the five thousand, who were completely satisfied, with much left over. Clearly a sign of divine abundance, the people are instructed to gather all the leftovers lest any be wasted.

The gathering of the leftovers is what strikes me. Jesus is moved with pity for the hungry crowd, and reveals his glory by multiplying five loaves and two fish. Having satisfied everyone, Jesus must have felt a deep gratitude for the Father's abundant love. Jesus honors the divine gift and generosity of the Father, and will not allow the 'leftovers' to go to waste.

What is being said here? The people are being called to notice the divine abundance they have been given. This is pure gift. God provided for hungry and weary people because of the prayer and concern of Jesus. Bread represents Eucharist, and Eucharist means thanksgiving. Are we thankful, even grateful for the love and providence that God shows to us? It is a given fact that we fail to realize the constancy of all that God does for us. What about all the 'leftover' graces and blessing that God offers us that we don't seem to notice? It is an interesting thought, isn't it?

God is constantly blessing us well beyond the particular things we regularly ask for. What about the blessings we fail to see, or see and ignore, or see and squander? It seems that Jesus wants to make sure the Father is noticed and honored for his abundant providence. In the abundant leftovers, the people realize the power of God in Jesus.

It is said that happy people are people who know and feel gratitude. Gratitude is at the heart of Christian prayer as we honor and love God not only for what God gives us, but also for who God is. People who know gratitude know the giftedness of life despite their trials and troubles. Grateful people do not always live on easy street, but they are people who see their blessings as being from God, and they respond with gratitude.

Take some time this week and count your blessings. It is clear we are in a difficult economic time, but God is never in a recession. Divine grace and providence is always flowing. Make sure you see the action of the Lord each day, and give thanks. Even those who give with unconditional love appreciate being noticed and appreciated.

Father John Esper