

A Word From Fr. Tom Niehaus

August 18, 2019



Peace On the Earth?

As a Social Studies teacher and possessing a life-long love of current issues I try to stay up on the regional, state, national and international news. Recently I have been tuning in to the upheaval that has been taking place in Hong Kong as well as in Russia to name two of the many “cradles of conflict” revealing tension in our world over political and personal freedoms. Locally, people in our nation having been calling for an end of gun violence after the latest shootings in Toledo, OH and El Paso, TX. There are even tensions among people in our own communities when it comes to political party affiliation and the impact that partisan politics has on our attitude toward immigrants, health care and abortion to name a few hot topics. As Catholics we are called to stand for the truth of the Gospel and to act with charity in all things, but never to water down our views so as to conform to worldly perspectives. Jesus said there will be peace on earth right? Or did he... In this week’s Gospel we hear, “Do you think that I have come to establish peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division (Luke 12:51).” This verse from Luke’s Gospel might catch us off guard if we do not really know who Jesus is. Recall that Jesus is the Son of God, fully human and divine and He has taken on flesh, dwelt among us so as to establish the truth that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. By His time spent on earth in public ministry teaching, preaching, healing diseases and casting out demons, Jesus reveals the power of faith, hope and love. Through the events that make up the Passion of Our Lord, we come to understand the deep sacrificial nature of God’s love for His people. Ultimately all people are to come into contact with the Gospel and have the opportunity to enter into new life through baptism and follow upon the path our Savior has paved for us in His own blood, opening up a way to salvation for those who confess His very name as Lord. Is this a recipe for peace or conflict? We know that Jesus is the Prince of Peace as well as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, who has His kingdom in heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven consists of the Holy Ones who have endured their time of trial on earth, possessing nothing for themselves but what can be gleaned from a life lived for Christ in the way of faith, hope and love. These people who seek to follow in the way of Jesus and live for the Kingdom are going to run into conflicts and struggles, but should not despair for they will receive divine assistance in their hour of need. The world sees her subjects fight battles over power, sex and money whereas those who belong to the kingdom of heaven journey with the guidance of sacrificial love in the ways of obedience, chastity and poverty. The establishment of peace on earth is only possible with God’s help, while the main quality of living out God’s will is a tranquility that surpasses all understanding. Perhaps modern conflict is the opportunity for us to find ourselves seeking refuge under God’s wings and peering out from that vantage point through daily prayer toward the homeland of peace that will reign forever.

Faith Formation

The start of the Faith Formation year is just around the corner. Students, families, teachers, volunteers and coordinators are all just a few weeks away from the first day of classes. As your parish priest I am ultimately responsible for the education of all the people in our parishes. The Church designates that parents are the first teachers of their children. This is a grave responsibility for parents. Education in the Catholic faith begins at home with prayer and the reading of scripture. This home experience of sharing the faith is then elevated when the entire community gathers for Holy Mass on Weekends and Holy Days in our local churches. Wednesday night faith formation bolsters the faith shared in the home and helps understand the depth of the communal celebrations that take place at Church. Each component works together. **WEDNESDAY FAITH FORMATION FOR A CATHOLIC CHILD IS NOT ENOUGH!** There must be prayer and scripture reading in the home and regular attendance at weekend Mass. With a healthy understanding that our Christian education must assist our students in the salvation of their souls, I am asking coordinators, volunteer teachers, students and parents to attend an opening session at each site to start the year. **September 11, 2019 at 6:45 pm at St. Patrick Church, Shieldsville for St. Patrick Faith Formation.** September 18, 2019 at 6:30 pm in Most Holy Redeemer of Montgomery for all who belong to St. Canice of Kilkenny and Most Holy Redeemer. These sessions are required for students and parents in all grades and will also allow for registration of students for each of the programs as well as opportunities to meet the teachers and new priest!

Adult Faith Formation

This Fall 2019 there will be two offerings of Adult Faith Formation for those in our area.

1. RCIA – Did you not get confirmed in the Catholic Church as a teenager? Is your spouse Catholic and you have been considering joining the Catholic Faith? If you are interested in becoming Catholic or learning more about the Catholic Faith because you don’t remember anything from your childhood CCD classes please join in this introduction course to the Catholic Faith beginning on Sunday September 15th at 6 pm at Most Holy Redeemer in Montgomery, MN.
2. Want to grow in holiness and go deeper into the rich teachings of the Catholic faith? Then take the challenge and join in the ten session Doctors of the Church Seminar – reading and discussion on the works of St. Catherine of Siena and St. Gregory of Narek. These classes will begin on Sunday September 15th at 7pm at Most Holy Redeemer in Montgomery, MN.

God bless you!

Fr. Tom Niehaus