

A Word From Fr. Tom Niehaus

September 1, 2019



Humble In the Lord's Eyes

On certain summer nights I close my eyes and sit under the stars with the wind caressing my face, remembering blessed moments from my life. For three summers I was able to serve as a camp counselor leading young people on adventures in Christ mostly in the vicinity of Rainy River and Rainy Lake. As I savor a summer moment, I begin to hum and different songs that we would sing at the evening campfire prayer times. This music flows out from my heart, pausing briefly I can almost see the campers faces through the flames and taste the smoky air on my tongue. One song that rises in the heart goes like this, "Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord (echo), and He (echo) shall lift (echo) you up (echo). Higher and higher." What that songs speaks to my heart about is the truth that God is God and I am not. At times in my life I have tried to take control of situations and have relied on myself more than trusting in God. At the beginning of most of those situations everything seemed to be going my way and then major problems and failures began to happen causing me to come to my senses and realize my sinfulness and error, thus turning back to God and letting Him guide me to a blessed end beyond what I could even plan out. I am sure many people have experiences like this in life where control was taken, God put aside and when things fall apart turning to Him to rescue us from the mess we have made. In this week's Gospel we are reminded that for the one who follows Jesus Christ that our posture must be one of authentic humility and trust. "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exulted (Luke 14:11)." The temptation can be great to control and manipulate and dominate people and situations, but the Lord has no place in our life if we are the primary solution to life's challenges. When we hand over everything to the Lord and then follow Him into challenges, there can be great ease and amazing resolution to the situations we find ourselves in. Take some time today to reflect on your life. Does pride or humility influence most of your decision making? If pride is dominate in your life, how might the Lord be inviting you to a place of trust and surrender? If you have been humbled recently, how has the Lord been present to you in that situation?

Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis Synod

This past Pentecost (June 8-9, 2019), the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis began a Synod process. The goal of the Archdiocesan Synod is to help Archbishop Hebda discern, through a consultative process, the pastoral priorities of our local Church today – and into the near future. Your participation, as the Catholic faithful, is key to a successful Synod. You are invited to participate by offering your prayers, pastoral concerns, and ideas for moving this Archdiocese forward. Learn more about the Synod and see a listing of Prayer and Listening Events scheduled for fall 2019 – winter 2020 at archspm.org/synod. Please prayerfully consider attending an upcoming Prayer and Listening Event, as part of the Pre-Synod Process and make your voice heard. Your input will help guide the Archdiocese over the next 5-10 years. By early September I will be nominating 12 people from our area to be part of our Most Holy Redeemer-St. Canice-St. Patrick synod team. Anyone can attend these events and the following listening sessions will be held in our area:

1. Tuesday October 29, 2019 at Divine Mercy in Faribault from 6-9 pm
2. Thursday November 7, 2019 at St. Wenceslaus in New Prague from 6-9 pm.

Communication

What a great joy to serve as a priest at St. Patrick – Shieldsville, St. Canice – Kilkenny and Most Holy Redeemer – Montgomery! There have been many blessed conversations and meetings that I have been a part of so far during these first eight weeks in the parish. I have appreciated the cards, notes, emails, texts and phone calls that you have directed my way. Each correspondence has led me to great times of reflection upon the Lord's goodness and His great love for His people. There is always a special place in my heart for those who have struggles or issues with situations in the parish or Catholic Church. Just make sure you include your name and or phone # or email or address so that I can get a hold of you and follow up on any situation of faith you may be in. As my mentor Fr. Michael Wensing – Pastor of Holy Name of Jesus in Watertown, SD said to me during my first two years of priesthood while in Rome, "Under no circumstance should a priest take time to entertain an anonymous letter." Taking advice from good priests has served me well for 11 years. Therefore, any and all correspondence that has no address or name will be immediately shredded. If one does not have the courtesy to identify themselves, then I have no obligation to read or respond to any anonymous correspondence. All of us on staff here in the parishes are present to listen to your needs and help you as best we can with the help of God. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

United in the Heart of Jesus Christ,

Fr. Tom Niehaus