

Cathedral Camp

Since our parish was established on the grounds of this most beautiful property in the Diocese of Fall River, I felt that I should address the matter of the camp closure. I am partly motivated by some of the misinformation and snarky commentary one encounters on social media.

Nothing Lasts Forever:

Let's begin with the acknowledgement that this camp has been in operation for a very long time, (7 or 8 decades or more, I'm not sure). Nothing lasts forever. Not only that, but sometimes the world changes beneath the feet of an organization rendering the old ways of operating no longer sustainable. Even though the Church runs "ministries" they don't operate on pure spirit: there needs to be an intelligent business model in place. The Diocese can be faulted for not attending to this aspect and for continually "kicking the can down the road" for as long as she did. So, rather than gradual adaptation to the times and the needs, we have this "shutdown" and, hopefully, in short order, some new plan for the property which will benefit children and youth.

Ignorance is Bliss

I have no presence on Social Media, but I am told of some of the commentary which is just ignorant of facts and, at times, just plain stupid. For example, people don't make a distinction between the parish and the camp, and so the commentators cynically wonder why the Diocese could afford the addition to the parish but not keep the camp open. Well, as you, dear reader know, they are two separate entities: the diocese subsidized the camp, the parish runs on the stewardship of parishioners. But, of course, this is forgivable since the church buildings are planted on the dead-center of the camp property. As I learned in my navigation classes at Mass Maritime, "*don't make decisions based on scanty information.*" It's a good maxim for everyone on Facebook and every other forum.

Then there's the "just plain stupid" category when someone advises that the Vatican could sell one painting and it would solve all of the camp's problems. Really? Maybe he could sell his wife's engagement diamond and help them out!

And there are plenty more where that came from.

The more I hear about the level of discourse on social media, the more I think our society is regressing to that of cave-dwellers.

How about some gratitude?

The camp has been run for a very long time and has hosted thousands of children, many of them who were from circumstances of poverty. Very many children who attended the camp where not even of the Catholic Faith; all were welcome to partake the beauty of what God had given us without discrimination. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul expended large amounts of funding to subsidize costs for the underprivileged to spend two-weeks or, in some cases, the whole summer, (especially for low income workers having no resources for daycare or other such services).

Perspective

The current situation is just a cessation of operations. The express desire of the Diocese is to study how the property may be best put to use in service of her mission to children and youth. It is not unusual for an organization to "press the re-set button" on operations when something is out of balance. Why the local Church gets hammered with vitriol on social media for doing the same is puzzling and infuriating.



The Parish

The current situation does opportune some clarification concerning the relationship between the parish and the camp. It has never been clear to me what exactly belongs to the parish and what belongs to the camp. Given that the first pastor of St. John's was also tasked with oversight of the camp, there was a blurring of distinctions to some extent. This has not been terribly problematic, but some clarity going forward would be helpful in the delineation of responsibilities, rights and other issues. It is hoped that this would be part of the discussions at the diocesan level. I will certainly promote this.

Apologies for the angry tone. Sometimes matters just go up my nose. May we have patience and pray that Holy Wisdom will guide the diocese to make good decisions in this regard.