

Deacon Jim's Corner

A Letter from Our Pastoral Coordinator

March 17, 2019

May Christ's peace, joy and hope be with you all!



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

On the weekend of March 8-10, Deacon Mike Teskey and I gathered with the Deacons (and our wives) of the Archdiocese of Seattle for our annual retreat at the Palisades. Deacon Joe Michalak, the Director of the Institute of Diaconate Formation from the Archdiocese of Minneapolis-St. Paul, was our presenter. Throughout the weekend, Deacon Joe kept asserting that our primary task as deacons is deepening our relationship with Christ, making that as strong as possible through our commitment to personal prayer. His hope is that through our words and actions as married clergy, we reflect the Word of God to others in what we proclaim, what we do as ministers of our Archbishop and in our devotion to our spouses as deacons. It was a great opportunity to gather with other classmates and fellow deacons and their spouses to listen, reflect and pray.

At the conclusion of the retreat, Fr. Kevin Moran, a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Seattle, living at the Palisades, presided at our Sunday mass. He, like our own Fr. Martin Bourke, is a priest from Ireland. His homily was based on the temptations of Jesus that we all heard on the First Sunday of Lent. He reminded us that Jesus' understanding of what the Jewish messiah was, differed greatly from the expectation of the day of political and fantastic power and might. Rather his understanding, Fr. Kevin remarked, was that of a Suffering Servant, one who ministered in humility. He suggested as well that our practices, whatever they are during Lent, are not to be "tokens," temporary actions as disciples as if the changes we invite are only seasonal in our missionary discipleship.

He then spoke to our most recent humiliation as a church, the sexual abuse scandals that have rocked us: the tragedy of so many victims being abused by people in power even priests, bishops and cardinals. His words cut us to the core and taught us that we must embrace the

humiliation that we as a group of clerics have caused. He warned us that the clericalism that exists in the church was the opposite of the example of Christ Jesus. The sexual abuses by the clergy harmed innocent children and seminarians. That violation, he stated, reflected an understanding of our role as ministers as people of power rather than servants who suffer for others. His words touched us deeply. It reminded me again of the responsibility we all have as disciples and those who are pastoral leaders to embrace humility and even as Fr. Kevin Moran suggested – humiliation.

When you read this, I will be away from Holy Rosary and Visitation for the 2nd week in a row helping to direct the retreat for the new class of diaconal candidates who are in their 3rd year of formation. I consider it a great opportunity to assist in the formation of those who hope to be ordained in 2020 as deacons of the Archdiocese of Seattle. These men and their wives are wonderful disciples who have added a formational program on top of their already busy lives.

This Lent, please pray for our Holy Father, Pope Francis, Archbishop Peter Sartain, and his Auxiliary bishops, Eusebio Elizondo and Daniel Mueggenborg. Please pray too for the victims of sexual abuse by our clergy. I would also ask that you pray for all priests and deacons who serve God's people in this Archdiocese. Finally please pray for our candidates in diaconal formation and their families as they discern their call to service.

In God's great love and mercy,

Deacon Jim

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deacon Jim". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deacon Jim Fish, Pastoral Coordinator
Holy Rosary and Visitation parishes
Archdiocese of Seattle