

Your Favorite Page

1. Is it good if a vacuum really sucks?
2. Why is the third hand on a watch called the second hand?
3. If a word is misspelled in the dictionary, how would we ever know?
4. If Webster wrote the first dictionary, where did he find the words?
5. Why do we say something is out of whack? What is a whack?
6. Why does “slow down” and “slow up” mean the same thing?
7. Why does “fat chance” and “slim chance” mean the same thing?
8. Why do “tug” boats push their barges?
9. Why do we sing “Take me out to the ball game” when we are already there?
10. Why are they called “stands” when they are made for sitting?
11. Why is it called “after dark” when it is really “after light?”
12. Doesn’t “expecting the unexpected” make the unexpected expected?
13. Why are a “wise man” and a “wise guy” opposites?
14. Why do “overlook” and “oversee” mean opposite things?
15. Why is “phonics” not spelled the way it sounds?
16. If work is so terrific, why do they have to pay you to do it?
17. If all the world is a stage, where is the audience sitting?
18. If love is blind, why is lingerie so popular?
19. If you are cross-eyed and have dyslexia, can you read all right?
20. Why do you press harder on the buttons of a remote control when you know the batteries are dead?
21. Why do we put suits in garment bags and garments in a suitcase?
22. How come abbreviated is such a long word?
23. Why do we wash bath towels? Aren’t we clean when we use them?
24. Why doesn’t glue stick to the inside of the bottle?
25. Why do they call it a TV set when you only have one?
26. Christmas – What other time of year do you sit in front of a dead tree and eat candy out of your socks?
27. Why do we drive on a parkway and park on a driveway?

Eye-rolling exercises

A pet shop held a competition to win a parrot. You could enter without buying anything, because there was no perches necessary.

There was a man who entered a local paper’s pun contest. He sent in 10 different puns, in the hope that at least one of the puns would win. Unfortunately, no pun in-ten-did.

The French restaurant had five dishwashing basins. They were known as the kitchen cinq.

If a swan can have a swan song, does that mean a cygnet can have a signature tune?

What do you call an overweight alien? An extra cholesterol.

When ceiling fans were invented, they were considered revolutionary.

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Greetings, my friend!

The summer is pretty much over, and by the time you get this, schools will be re-opening for a new year. In the midst of ruminating about the upcoming football season, it also occurred to me that you and I need to be prepared for a deluge of political (which have already started here in South Bend) and Christmas commercials (around Halloween). Lord have mercy on us all! I was halfway tempted to start a contest whereby benefactors would put a penny in a jar for every political/Christmas commercial they saw or heard and then donate it to Holy Cross. The winner would get an all-expenses paid trip to the beautiful silence of the Mojave Desert. ‘Course the silence would probably drive people nuts too! And it’s already been too hot around the country this summer! Maybe a glacier in Alaska?

But I digress ... There’s lots of news to report.

In June, the Provincial Chapter elected a new Provincial to succeed Rev. David Tyson, C.S.C., whose term had

expired. **Rev. Thomas J. O’Hara, C.S.C.**, hails from Hazleton PA, and the former Easter Province. Before a sabbatical this past year Fr. Tom finished a term as President of King’s College, so he goes from one challenge to another. Personally, I am very much looking forward to Fr. Tom’s administration. The former Eastern Province had a very different culture and way of being with each other, compared to the former Indiana Province. Tom is the first elected Provincial of the United States Province.

On July 28th, six novices professed their First Vows in Holy Cross. Five returned to Moreau Seminary to start their theological studies and one returned to the C.S.C. community in France. In the District of East Africa, five novices made their First Vows.

Speaking of the Novitiate, you may or may not know, it is located near Cascade, Colo, one of the towns threatened by the Waldo Canyon fire in

July. Along with all residents of Cascade, the novices and staff were evacuated. They lived in the buildings of Sacred Heart Parish in downtown Colorado Springs and assisted the Red Cross in feeding, housing and counseling those who were driven from their homes by the fire. The fire came within a mile of the Novitiate buildings before the wind shifted (it was that wind shift that doomed the homes in northwest Colorado Springs). One small hermitage in the “back 40” was lost to the fire. It strikes me that there’s a reflection there: What if our prayer for a particular intention results in harm or damage to another entity or person? But that’s for another newsletter.

Back to the Formation Program: when the new year starts, we will welcome four new candidates to the Old College Program and 16 men to Moreau Seminary (nine new to formation plus seven continuing formation from Old College). At the end of August, **Brian C. Ching, C.S.C., Mark F. DeMott, C.S.C., and Jarrod M. Waugh, C.S.C.**, will make their Final Vows and be ordained to the Diaconate the next day.

I hope and pray the summer has been good for you and that you found relief from the heat that afflicted most of the country. Wasn’t that something else?

Be God’s smile for someone!

Fr. Herb

☺ Hugs!

THE FRAME AND THE PAINTING

Choosing the right frame for paintings is absolutely essential. If you take an original French master’s painting, for example, and put a black metal frame around it, the results devastate the appearance and value of the artwork. Conversely, putting a large gilded frame around a paint-by-numbers makes the whole thing look ludicrous.

Now what does this framing thing have to do with the price of eggs, you’re wondering?

Well, I’m going to suggest in this reflection that your life is like a master painting, an exquisite work of art unlike any other in the world’s history. Day by day, your experiences, thoughts, emotions – positive and negative alike – are like brush strokes in that painting. Each moment finds you adding yet another color, another texture; or perhaps you’re beginning, or ending, another image within the piece of art you are.

I’m going to further suggest that your daily routine is the frame around this artwork – within the framework of your every day duties, responsibilities and choices, you live and move and have your being.

Right now our Church is currently in Ordinary Time. It’s the longest liturgical Season in the Church Year, running either 33 or 34 weeks. The readings for the Sundays and weekdays of Ordinary Time are meant to help us live out our faith in our daily lives. Just as with our everyday life, there are breaks in the routine when we have special celebrations: five of the nine holy days of obligation fall during Ordinary Time, as do seven Feasts or Solemnities.

We tend to think of Ordinary Time as so – well – ordinary!!! Ditto for our lives. But without the ordinary, how can we possibly appreciate the beauty and significance of the great moments of life? Look at it this way: if most of the days of our lives were of epic proportions, wouldn’t the routine, slow days be cause for angst, such as “What’s wrong with me?” There are people who live that way ... take the stars and starlets, the rich and famous, for example. If their day isn’t spectacular, it’s like the world has come to an end! They are so focused on the gilt frame that the actual artwork suffers and becomes a childlike finger-painting.

But there’s 99 percent of us who don’t live like that. We’re so ordinary!!! Our days are so predictable. Yet these days and weeks can be just as filled with blessing as the most sacred seasons of the Church Year and the high points of our lives. Pope Benedict put it well in one of his Sunday talks to the folks gathered in St. Peter’s Square: The beauty of this time lies in the fact that it invites us to live our ordinary life as a way of holiness, that is, of faith and friendship with Jesus, continually discovered and rediscovered as teacher and lord, way, truth and life of man (and woman too!!!).

Ordinary life as a way of holiness!!! Wow!!!

Most folks are somewhat familiar with the schedule of monks and cloistered orders of nuns. They know the religious gather six times a day for the Divine Office, for Mass, for meals and have specified periods of work and silent study. They get up and go to bed at the same time every day. Maybe on a special feast there might be a slight change in the schedule, but basically it’s the same thing day after day after day. And we definitely see their routine as a holy way of life.

Our own days are just as scheduled as that of the monks and nuns. There are differences of course ... and each day does have its variations, but by and large it’s the usual refrain of “New day, same old stuff.” But do we consider *our* everyday routine holy? *Our* ordinary lives as holy? Probably not.

I wonder what Jesus did for the first 30 years of his life? Or Mary and Joseph? Or how about the great saints? Were their days marked by ecstatic visions, long hours in prayer, fasting and acts of penitence? Maybe, maybe not. But for sure, they all had to clean their rooms, take out the garbage, do the dishes, deal with cranky people, put up with their own aches and pains, make sure the kids did their homework, cook their meals, watch the budget, worry about other members of the family, change the diapers, care for their elderly parents, call the handymen when things broke, do the wash, sweep the floors, make the beds, feed the animals, keep the boss happy, do the laundry, weed the garden, make nice after an argument with the spouse ... well, you get the idea. On top of all these daily

activities, they had to deal with the everyday sacrifices, disappointments, set-backs, struggles and temptations common to any human life.

What then was their secret? How did they become saints? I would like to suggest that their holiness – and yours – comes because they were conscious of God’s presence with them in each activity of their everyday life. Then they were thankful for that presence. This is where the frame and the painting become beautifully complimentary to each other.

This does not have to be a 24-7 consciousness. It’s impossible for us to spend every waking second in full awareness of God’s presence. Our minds aren’t wired that way. Heck, I can’t even spend five minutes of prayer time without my mind wandering off somewhere!!! Even while praying aloud the Eucharistic Prayer at Mass, sometimes I mentally wander off (I still remember a few embarrassing moments where I started to say what I was thinking ... ay-yi-yi!!!). God, however, is not bound by human constraints. God has chosen to dwell with ordinary people living ordinary lives and His presence makes every ordinary moment and activity a source of blessing and salvation for the world.

I deeply believe that the secret of blending the frame and the artwork into a complementary whole is to pause every once in awhile and do three things: one, observe your surroundings or what you are doing; two, become aware of the divine presence; and three (and most important), express your gratitude to God with a simple “Thank you.”

Many find it hard to set aside a specific time each day for prayer and even if they can do this, they’re frustrated by their seeming inability to focus on their prayer. But those momentary pauses can easily be built into a day. Trust me when I say that the effects of this prayer are cumulative. In time, you will notice a profound change in your relationship to God, to the world, to other people.

The story of Martha and Mary is a perfect example of what I’m trying to say. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, while Martha busied herself preparing dinner. Typical homes in those days were just one large room. So that means Martha could

have been listening to Jesus while cooking, but instead she allowed herself to harbor resentful feelings. Everything you do in the course of a day allows you the opportunity to see, hear, feel, smell, taste, touch the presence of God with you.

So look up from the computer screen and look out the window, or close your eyes, take a deep breath and thank God for the gift of life, of the fact that you have a job, etc. Stop lights are perfect places to look around and see the beauty of God’s creation. Waiting in line, or waiting in the waiting room – another wonderful place to pray, especially for the people you see around you. While folding laundry, pause and thank God you have clothes to wear, or pray for the people whose labor went into the making of that clothing. You can pause in reading this reflection, thank God for the superlative and extraordinary sagacity of Fr. Herb (and then offer a petition for his humility!!!). I could go on with more examples, but there are space limitations here!

You notice perhaps how big I am on gratitude. The same thing was written in the May reflection: one way to avoid that feeling of powerlessness is to be thankful for blessings. Thankfulness is at the core of a happy life. Lack of gratitude is simply another way of saying “hell.” Think about that for a moment!

No matter where you are, no matter what you’re doing, no matter who you’re with, no matter what the time of day – there is always the possibility for that thankful pause. Be prudent, though; sometimes it’s best to postpone this prayer momentarily. If, for example, you’re running a machine that stamps out steel plates, you might not want to lose your concentration, lest you end up thanking God for the skills of emergency room personnel.

Because of God’s presence within it, your ordinary time is already holy. Once we pause to become aware of that presence, the frame and art that is our life immediately takes on an entirely different dimension and beauty. Isn’t it amazing how easy God makes it for us!?