

From the Pastor:

The Native Americans of the American Southwest believed that every animal was intended to teach us a lesson on how to live. The rattlesnake, they believed, was meant to teach us about fear. They believed that in late summer, when the rattlesnake would shed its skin, it became temporarily immobile and blind, and was therefore in a very vulnerable position. In that situation, the rattlesnake was controlled by fear. If it sensed movement in its vicinity, it would immediately strike out in blindness after the sound that it had heard. If anything brushed against its skin, it would immediately bite the spot that had been touched, thereby injecting venom into its own body from its fangs. This of course would lead to death. So according to the indigenous people, the lesson that the rattlesnake teaches us about fear is this: Our fear can destroy us. For that reason, it is very important for each one of us to identify the fears in our life and deal with them. It is important that we do this, because ignoring fear can lead to blindness and paralysis. Ignoring fears can rob us of life.



All fear is bondage. If we let fear control us, it robs us of our freedom to act. It paralyzes us. It sets us in a vicious circle, where we keep knowing the things that we should do but somehow never find the power to do them. How do we break this bondage? How do we short-circuit this vicious circle that keeps robbing us of our life? We have to reach outside of ourselves. As those in AA would say, we have to find our higher power – in our case, Christ. This is what Jesus is talking about in today's gospel. Three times in the Gospel he says, "**Do not be afraid.**" He can say this because he knows that not a sparrow falls to the ground without God knowing about it and caring about it. He wants us to know that we are worth more than sparrows. Jesus tells us that to deal with fear, we must recognize love. We must recognize the love of God that surrounds us, the love of God that has intimate knowledge of our life, the love of God that knows the number of hairs on our head. If we can claim that love and recognize God's presence in our life, we can overcome the fears that paralyze us.

The Gospel today encourages us to entrust ourselves into God's care, to believe in God's love, to trust that God knows all the needs and problems of our lives, to know that God will not abandon us.

From the time of the renovation at St. Joseph's church in 1996, under the watchful eye of Fr. Ron Menty, **beautiful handmade quilted hangings**, created by the Women Quilters Group of the parish, hung gloriously on the wall behind the altar. The hangings depicted various images of the Gospel and they were interchanged seasonally. The hangings are indeed treasures to the church and they are to be handled with utmost care. They were sewn with love and devotion for God and for the church. However, the hangings also covered the crucifix. I was told upon my arrival, that some people were anxious to see the crucifix on the wall. So, since the hangings have been visible for so long, I thought it best to allow the crucifix to be exposed for a change. The hangings will continue to be visible but they will hang by the church vestibule. The glory and magnificence of the Lord Almighty is visible in all places!

Thank you to **Christine Goss**, for organizing the High School Graduation celebration at mass last Sunday at Immaculate Conception. She also created a very beautiful video for the graduates that you can find on our parish Facebook page and our website. We offer every blessing and prayer for all graduating seniors everywhere! Go forth in the love of Christ!

Until next week, be well, do good deeds, and say your prayers.

Fr. Jerry

OUR PRAYER: Loving God, be present to us and grant us wisdom, so that we, who may feel anxious about change, might trust in Your love and rest in the Changelessness that is You.