

June 26-27, 2010

From the Pastor,

With almost every blessing comes a problem and with every problem can come a blessing. One of my blessings as a priest has been to have the opportunity to serve in many parishes. It is a blessing because I have gotten to know many wonderful people in many different communities. The problem is that it causes sadness when someone you have come to care about is having problems or is in trouble. This week has been especially tough for me in dealing with the sadness of many losses by many friends.

In last Sunday's OWH there was a story about the flood in Clearwater, NE and how the people dealt with it. I know everyone that was mentioned in that article and know who owned the four houses that couldn't be protected. Having gotten to know the people of St. Theresa Parish and the rest of the people in that town, I was not surprised by their heroic efforts.

Today I received pictures from Neligh, the next town east of Clearwater. It looks like there was far more damage in Neligh from the flooding of the Elkhorn River that goes right through the town. Once again I know the people whose houses and property were damaged. I also know that the man who was killed when the bridge collapsed near Norfolk was from Neligh. His parents are wonderful parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi Parish. It gives me a lot to pray for.

That is part of what being a priest is all about. Many times I am not able to solve problems. Most of the time I cannot even be with the people as they are facing disaster. That is when I pray for them. When I am with people who are experiencing disasters I try to help them understand their faith well enough to deal with their problems. For most of us it takes a long time to really incorporate the Gospel message well enough to have confidence in the midst of crisis. But the message is basically simple. St. Paul summarizes it in his letter to the Romans, chapter 8, verses 28-39. But here is the summary of that summary:

“If God is for us, who can be against us?...What will separate us from the love of Christ: Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?...No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Sometimes there are things I can do, and even better we can do. Working together to support our school, the local food pantries, the Holy Father (in this week's second collection) and more we make such a difference. About five weeks ago some of us got word from Raphael Okitafumba that his parent's home was completely destroyed by fire set by a mob that was protesting the arrest of a young local leader. His family is safe but most of the things he was putting together to prepare for the work he would be doing after his ordination were destroyed. Raphael was the seminarian from the Congo who stayed at Holy Name for a year while he finished his degree at Creighton. He will be ordained August 15th. If any of you would like to chip in with me to help with the expense of replacing some of these things just mark your donation “Raphael” and get it to me by July 5 and I will make sure he receives it. Sometimes I (we) can help.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank