

Feb. 29-Mar. 1, 2020

Thoughts from the pastor,

Well, I made it back and things went well. That is why I didn't pray that you would have a blizzard here. The trip was informative. I got to see some places in Mexico, and stopped in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. That Panama Canal was especially good because I saw a film on what it took to build it. We went through the one that is 100 years old. As I am sure you know, there is now a new one. I got to do all the things that I hoped. I had Mass every day. I walked over 125 miles or about eight miles per day. While doing that I prayed at least four rosaries each day and read books. I read Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary, by Brant Pitre. It is a very informative book on Church teachings on Mary and how they didn't just come up as a whim. I read Citadel of God and Lay Siege to Heaven. Both of them are by Louis de Wahl. The first is about St. Benedict and the culture he lived in. The second was all about St. Catherine of Siena. Both were good but the second was the best. I read The Day Is Now Far Spent by Robert Cardinal Sarah and Nicolas Diat. That is Cardinal Sarah's sense of the Church today. I will be referring to that when I do the parish mission in a few weeks. I read The Divine Plan by Paul Kengar and others. It is about St. Pope John Paul II and President Reagan's part in bringing down Communist Russia. That was another book that helps you see that God is still working, which is helpful after reading Cardinal Sarah's book. Lastly, I read most of The Crucifix on Mecca's Front Porch by David Pinault. That gives a very detailed view of the differences between Islam and Christianity, and is helpful in understanding some of how Mohammad would have been thinking as Islam came to be.

As you can see, I don't just vegetate on vacation. The only thing that didn't go as well as I hoped, was that, even though I ate very sparingly, I only lost three pounds. But now I am off the ship and back to the boat of STM.

The first thing that happened was the meeting of the parish council members and leadership of St. Joan of Arc, Holy Cross, and STM parishes. We are continuing to look at future options for the Catholic churches in this area as we deal with the reality of less priests available in the coming years. The meeting did not get us any further in the process. It mostly made sure that everyone was on the same page in terms of the situation. I will continue to give you more information on this as the process develops. But the reality is that the average age of priests is rising in our area and many are getting closer to retirement. This is one of the main reasons that we are doing Exposition and Eucharistic Adoration on Fridays during Lent. It will go from after the 8:15am Mass until the end of 6:30pm Stations of the Cross. The main focus is to pray for vocations to the priesthood. As I have mentioned, it is in your best interest to pray for priests to replace the old guys like me with new ones that are smarter than I am. They will be needed, so come and pray.

The Bible Study starts this weekend. I will have my notes from the Sunday morning classes posted on the website each week. I just have to give them to people who are smart enough to know how to do that, which goes back to my last comment on smarter priests.

God bless you,

Fr. Frank Baumert, pastor