



Fr. Jason's Wishful Thinking... A "WOW" Kind of Week

I write to you this weekend about an important reality: *God's providence*. Sometimes, I can only marvel at the grace of God and how He works in the world. I spoke of one of those moments three weeks ago when describing my trip to Arizona, Utah, and Nevada. When we talk about God's providence, we are speaking about how God accomplishes things in His own time. One of the most important lessons that God strives to teach me is PATIENCE. Sometimes, good things happen when He is ready, not when I am ready. The events of this week prove my point.

For months I have patiently waited for concrete to be poured around the new metal building at St. Joseph. After a long story that I will not tell here, we ended up with extra concrete promised to us, so we were able to get the original job done and we were able to add two sidewalks: one going to the mausoleum complex and one leading to the HVAC room on the side of the new church. It will be nice to access these areas without walking through water or mud. Meanwhile, the rear A/C unit on the bus was fixed, and it will soon be parked on the new concrete pad between the old church and the new metal building.

Last year, I ordered a whole bunch of brown scapulars, hoping to have time to explain it to the second graders before First Communion (in May 2018) and get them enrolled. I totally forgot about it! Thanks to some reminders from Jen Daigle, I made note of the Feast of Mount Carmel and worked it into my homily this past weekend. How amazing that 138 parishioners showed up to be enrolled in the brown scapular between Monday and Tuesday! Even more powerful and rewarding was the fact that most of them took advantage of "drive-thru confession" as I described it. As I heard confessions, occasionally I learned that it had been 15, 20, 30 or 50 years since the last confession. The fact that they came to the sacrament was well-worth the efforts. Congratulations to all those who came to confession and received your brown scapulars! I am very proud of you for stepping up to the plate! I think everyone got a kick out of the drive-thru confession idea of writing down their list of sins. When it was time for absolution, I would either crumple up their sins or rip up the paper, which made the gesture of forgiveness even more meaningful. So in God's providence, the brown scapular enrollment happened.

I have been your pastor now for nine years. We have slowly but surely saved over \$220,000 to build a new rectory. I will be meeting with a house planner/draftsman this week to take my sketches and get them finalized for diocesan review. I would like to enjoy the new rectory for some time before my successor is assigned in the future.

Jason Cates, our new maintenance coordinator, has been working hard with me to develop some long-term plans for our two parishes. He has been on the St. Stephen Parish Hall roof repairing leaks with tar (the St. Joseph Hall roof is next), we are working on some improvements to landscaping (including repairs to the St. Joseph sprinkler system), and the St. Stephen Hall renovation is coming along well. We are at the point where we are ready to work on the ceiling and we will replace all the ceiling tiles with something better than the old tiles. This has been my latest test in patience, but a great success story that I get to share with you this week...