

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – JULY 16, 2017

Dear Parishioners and Families,

The Gospel stories, and indeed so much of the entire Bible, describes both a pastoral and an agricultural people. Contrast this with so much of our society which would be an industrial and manufacturing society. This rural area of Randolph, however, is more like the society of Jesus, pastoral and agricultural. In today's first reading from Isaiah and the Gospel reading from Matthew describe an agricultural society. This is us.

The Parable today speaks of the planter going out to sow the seed. The seed represents a person and the life of the seed tells of four conditions where each hears The Word about the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven is the goal and the future in God's plan.

The first person hears the Word of God but these are simply words "blown in the wind". The second person hears the Word of the Kingdom and jumps for joy, but this is an emotional binge and the words never take root. The third person hears the Word of God but there is too much on the person's plate and life is too comfortable to consider the future. Greed and money crowd out the growth. The fourth person hears and unlike the other three seeds **understands deeply**, grows in the understanding and bears fruit.

The Parable also describes a growth in maturity of the one hearing God's Word. The person understands the necessity of working long and hard for a delayed reward. Too many people want a return on their investment immediately and are not willing to farm and work patiently. Perhaps it might be compared to the false day-dreaming of a person who wants to hit the winning home run but never prepares for it with long and hard hours of practice on the field.

Thank You For all the Festival Workers and Their Results

The St. Joseph Family Festival was certainly successful in opening up our community to a vast number of our neighbors, bringing our own parish together in its preparation, and in being financially successful for the benefit of our school and church. Again I wish to thank Bruce Hartong and all the members of our parish who labored directly or indirectly to make this successful.

While the income from the festival is only the tertiary point of our efforts, it is a quantitative measure of the festival's success. The gross income was almost identical to last year, \$78,000. We expect the net to be around \$30,000. For the sake of understanding how this money is used, this profit would pay the salary and benefits for one teacher. This might seem like a small gain. The full gain of the entire festival is our outreach to the community, gathering our own parish together, and this profit. Most helpful.

I also want to thank publically Bruce Zoldan and the Phantom Fireworks organization which he owns and heads. The exciting fireworks display engaged everyone, even neighbors on their porches. We all looked up into the heavens and enjoyed the festival of light. That light and our awe are symbols of God's presence.

Bus Tour Visiting Philadelphia Churches and Points of Interest

Fr. David Misbrener and I have both talked about a bus tour possibly in September or November to Philadelphia. Fr. Misbrener is an expert in leading these particular expeditions. He would hope to visit several churches in Philadelphia including the St. John Neumann Center and also Independence Square. The trip is likely three days and two nights. Fr. Misbrener is asking his parish as I am asking our parish how many people might be interested in such a trip. If you find that this fits your desire, please sign the sheet in the back of the church or call Sandy (628-9941). This does not commit you at this time, as we are simply trying to find out what is the interest.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.
July 16, 2017