

Good News

Dear Friends,

Last weekend was a challenge for the people of God in the Diocese of Rochester. The announcement that the diocese filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy sent shock through pews. As I said in my post-Mass remarks, this was not an easy decision and was made after much consultation, discussion and prayer. To stand in front of the parishioners at each Mass was daunting, but it was the right thing to do. I wish to thank everyone who offered a positive word or expression of support during this difficult time. Fr. Brown and I greatly appreciate all that you do for us and we ask for your continued prayers.

I ask that you refer to last weekend's bulletin which included the letter to the faithful from Bishop Matano as well as a question and answer sheet. I cannot stress how important it is to reference this sheet for information. One parishioner approached me and said they did research on bankruptcy, but it was a different type than the diocese filed. A parishioner from my former parish sent information about bankruptcy for a Catholic diocese, but it came from a diocese from a state in the mid-west, and little of it applies to our present situation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

As last Saturday was the second Saturday of the month, I was able to gather with priests in the Southern Tier gathered for our monthly dinner. Considering last week's news, this could not have come at a better time. This gave us a boost, so to speak, and a reminder of what is really important: the priesthood of Jesus Christ. For us, it was an opportunity to look ahead at what needs to be done differently for the sake of the Catholic Faith. The practice of the authentic Catholic faith comes from the celebration of the Eucharist and the sacraments by a validly ordained priest, who is an extension of the bishop, a direct successor to the apostles, who model their teaching, preaching and governance in the way that Jesus himself guided others in the gospel. If we need a wake-up call to realize that good and holy priests must come from the pews of our parish, not from trees, this is it. In the wake of such difficult times and scandal, it will be even more challenging to cultivate a new generation of priests. Yet, it is critical that vocations be fostered in the home through prayer and discussion, with the realization that God has planted each person's vocation in their hearts long before birth. The church rejoices when a deacon, priest or bishop is ordained, a man and wife enter the sacrament of matrimony, or a man or woman enter into religious life. The church mourns when a person enters a vocation that God did not intend for them, and when this happens, the eventual results are damaging. When discerning, we have to remember that we discern God's will (thy kingdom come, as we pray in the Lord's Prayer), not ours, and that vocations service are directed toward the salvation of all.

A few weeks ago at the 9:00am Mass, I made an error in the distribution of Holy Communion to the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. For some reason, I skipped offering them the Sacred Host but did offer them the Precious Blood. They handled it well, and I was surprised when they approached me after Mass and ask if something was wrong: it was simply my mistake! However, the episode does provide the opportunity for further catechesis. The Doctrine of Concomitance states that the fullness of Christ is present in both species (Precious Host and Precious Blood). Concomitance comes from the Latin word *concomitantia*, meaning to accompany. I find the following paragraph from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to be helpful in this matter. The citation (paragraph 10) comes from a document called "*Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under both kinds in the dioceses of the United States of America.*" It states:

"The Church also teaches and believes that "immediately after the consecration the true body of our Lord and his true blood exist along with his soul and divinity under the form of bread and wine. The body is present under the form of bread and the blood under the form of wine, by virtue of the words [of Christ]. The same body, however, is under the form of wine and the blood under the form of bread, and the soul under either form, by virtue of the natural link and concomitance by which the parts of Christ the Lord, who has now risen from the dead and will die no more, are mutually united."

With need for continued prayers,

Fr. Jones

