

CHAPLAIN'S BULLETIN MARCH 27, 2022



Dear Folks,

I remember the Ray Stevens song “Everything is Beautiful” including the line, “There is none so blind as he who will not see.” We know that we do not have to choose to have blind spots just like we don’t have to plant weeds in our gardens. They’re just there, and we have to recognize them and root them out, or they take over.

I would suggest that one very fertile ground for blind spots is the broader consequences of our choices, and the responsibility we bear for them. I’m thinking about how we deal with Church. Over the years, I’ve heard many people concerned about what is happening (or not happening) in the Church, but many are strongly focused on what other people should be doing about it, often the Pope, the bishops, and the priests. This is a formula for helplessness.

As Batman once said, “I don’t do ‘helpless.’”

If we are willing to look, might we find ways in which the faithful can each play a role in turning the Church around?

Fully conscious, active participation. The Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium) says, “By way of promoting active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence (SC 30).” Some people are ill, or just working their way through mental blocks, and it is all they can do to be present at all. We need to have a lot of compassion for them. However, the more we are able to participate actively, not only are we more fully engaged (we are called to give our entire selves to God), but also the more we bear witness that this is worth our best effort, and that energy can strengthen their faith and their prayer.

Learn about our faith. Lots and lots of Catholics have left the Catholic faith because someone sat down with them, showed them some Bible verses, and explained why Catholicism is “wrong” and “unbiblical.” Scott Hahn, in his younger days, was in the business of leading Catholics away from their faith and said that it was easy, because they knew so little about their faith. How many Catholics stop learning about their faith when they finish eighth grade or get confirmed? What if we stopped learning about all the important aspects of life when we were in eighth grade? How successful would we be in life? Can we see what would happen if it were the rule, not the exception, that Catholics would be life-long learners about their faith, according to their ability? Obviously, while I use the little slivers of time I have at Mass available to slip some teaching in, that will not answer the need by itself.

How are we talking about the Church as a whole, and about our faith community in particular? Are we bringers of good news? If we talk about what is wrong, is it in the context of how we can make things better? If we catch ourselves complaining for the sake of complaining, how might that time and energy be used to make the

situation better?

Can we see other ways each person can make a difference in the future flourishing of the Church? As Jesus said, “One sows, and another reaps (John 4:37).” Every seed sown matters.

It starts with how we see the situation.

The Pope, the bishops, and the priests are prominent, but they are a small minority within the Church. What people read about and what they see on a screen are not as powerful as personal contact. How the Church is seen, how it is able to attract people, will depend mostly on the Catholic faithful.

Blessings

Fr Jim