

BULLETIN – SEPTEMBER 25

Welcome to our Fall Festival! Whether you are a regular parishioner, an alumnus or alumna, or a guest this weekend, we hope you enjoy our annual Fall Festival. This grand affair has become one of the significant events of our parish social life. We offer games and prizes that are perhaps more affordable to a wider variety of people than some other events in the community, and we are happy to do so. The smiles and laughter and good times which people take with them from our end-of-summer bash are of far more value to all of us than the financial benefit to the parish. *You* are the apostles, *you* are the ones who go out into the community to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to others. If our Festival helps you to do that in any way, by being more neighborly, more joyfully attentive to the needs of others – we have succeeded far beyond the “bottom line,” which of course also helps us to address the needs of our various parish apostolates. Thank you for joining us. And for our Festival chairs and all who have worked and are working so hard to make today a great success, God bless you for your generosity!

Our August CSA rebate amounted to **\$1,968**, for a total so far of **\$6,471** returned to our parish for upkeep of our buildings (now all over 50 years old!) and for our other service needs. Thank you for making good on your pledges.

Another anniversary. We solemnly commemorated the 15th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on our country on September 11, 2001, with an immediate loss of well over 3,000 lives. Fifteen years before that somber event, a “weather event” was taking place here in Michigan that most commentators regard as our state’s greatest natural disaster. On September 10, 1986, a storm system moved into central Michigan which measured 180 miles from east to west and 60 miles from north to south. Rainfall amounts in the first two days measured from 8” to 14”, but that wasn’t the end of it. It rained for 26 days. That’s not the scriptural “40 days and 40 nights,” but when you’re living through it, who’s counting? It was common during that time to hear people wryly joke about building an ark.

I had just moved to St. Adalbert’s from Lake Odessa in July of 1986. I was really enjoying biking and walking from the parish to the Tribunal on Sheldon—until September 10, when the rain started and made anything but the car or bus impractical for almost a month. After a couple weeks of rain without much letup, the whole city began to smell like rot. We were simply waterlogged. The dam on the Rogue River between Rockford and the Grand River failed, and was never replaced. Even more worrisome were the big dams on the Muskegon River. Had Rogers, Croton, or Hardy failed—and the authorities were definitely worried--the damage all the way to Lake Michigan would have been cataclysmic.

My most memorable experience of that month was walking over to the Fourth Street Dam one evening to see how high the water actually was. A huge crowd had gathered near the fish ladder. The Fourth Street Dam was not visible. The torrent of water rushing down the river was so high that it was just one huge, level stream. No part of the dam was evident. The water under the Sixth Street bridge was just below the deck level; and, if I recall correctly, the City even closed the bridge for a few days, deeming it unsafe for motorists and pedestrians alike.

Perhaps after the tornadoes of the 1950's and 1960's and the floods of the 1980's, it's a little more difficult for some of us to appreciate the sense of alarm and panic which some in the news media seem bent on creating any time it snows, rains, or gets colder or hotter. I certainly don't deny that human life and activity is capable of causing some changes in weather patterns. So does bovine life and activity, since the methane generated by cattle (which, of course, are raised in large numbers to feed humans) has a decided impact on the atmosphere. But these changes seem small relative to the enormous impact of events which can be and have been caused by earthquakes, volcanoes, and extra-terrestrial objects. We have absolutely no control over those things. Let's be clear: NONE of us should deliberately be contributing to the degradation of the earth, whether through our careless disposal of trash or the excessive use of fuel of any kind. That was NEVER okay, before Al Gore discovered climate change or since. But also, NONE of us should be victimized by the environmental "guilt creep" emanating from some quarters. I refer to those who seem bound and determined to hold the "rich nations" financially responsible for any and every natural disaster which has befallen the human race since they found out they can make a fast billion by accusing others with their broadsides.

Will they never go away? The two disgraced Michigan state legislators who in the last couple of years coupled themselves right out of office in an adulterous affair just don't seem to get it. First, when denial didn't work, they apparently thought a simple apology would be all that was necessary to restore their sterling reputations and get them back to working hard for their constituents. When the House declared that their ethics violations were sufficient to not re-admit them, they were shocked. When the courts didn't give them the satisfaction they wanted, they took their case to the public. When election time came around, each ran for the same office from which they had been disengaged by the legislature, apparently thinking that they would surely be vindicated by the constituents who had grown to love them so. Oops, each wound up being rather soundly defeated, trounced even, in an open election. Rumors of voter fraud were disregarded by everyone, apparently, except those who were responsible for starting the rumors. Now each has announced that they want money, LOTS of money (which would ultimately come from you and me and their enamored constituents) for the indignities and violations of civil rights laws to which they have been so cruelly subjected. It all brings to mind the words of the chief counsel for the U.S. Army, Joseph Nye Welch, to Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, during the Army-McCarthy hearings on June 9, 1954: "Have you no sense of decency, sir? At long last, have you left no sense of decency?" In this case, the answer seems clear.

Follow your conscience! Just make sure it's an *informed* conscience before you let it lead you anywhere. Pray the Scriptures, read the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and listen to 1140-AM WVHF Holy Family Radio. Turn it on in the car and you'll have a tried and true GPS to help you find your way through life. God bless you!

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: “The First Amendment was not written to protect people and their laws from religious values. It was written to protect those values from government tyranny” (President Ronald W. Reagan, 1911-2004).