

Fr. Simon Sez

Fr. Simon's Retreat Report: I was gone on my annual 8-day retreat (minus last weekend's Masses) through last Wednesday. It was one of my best individual, directed retreats. I highly recommend Dr. Carole Brown at the Sioux Spiritual Center, Howes, SD (south of Faith). It has been available to only Native Americans for the past 40 years. It has a log cabin home that sleeps 29 people, a 1918 pioneer church, and a log chapel in a beautiful, 30 acre, Cheyenne River Break. The Diocese of Rapid City is having a capital campaign presently to try to keep it open. Check it out at <https://www.siouxspiritualcenter.org/>.



Blackrobe in Gettysburg 140th Parade Saturday, June 24, 2023 : I submitted an entry in the parade titled "Blackrobe." It started with a black 1995 Pontiac Firebird Formula (my deceased brother Gerard's car) owned by my nephew Austin Simon and Lindsey (Wiley) Simon, then my black "steel horse" (2008 750 Honda Shadow Spirit) driven by Mike Montang, and at the end was me, a Catholic priest wearing a black robe (cassock) walking.

The spiritual leaders of some Sioux tribes told their tribal members, "When the blackrobes arrive, listen to them." Fr. Pierre-Jean De Smet, S.J. was a Jesuit Catholic priest wearing a blackrobe when he arrived in the Dakota Territory during the 1840's. He was welcomed by the Yankton Sioux Tribe (known as the friendliest tribe to the white man) and eventually became "Friend of Sitting Bull." He got Sitting Bull and the U.S. Government together to arrive at the second Treaty of Fort Laramie that succeeded. He went down the Missouri River, passing by here in 1846, 36 years before the founding of Gettysburg, SD.

According to Wikipedia, the Native Americans gave him the affectionate nickname De Grote Zwartrok (The Great Black Skirt) aka Blackrobe.



Be Not Afraid: Scott Hahn Reflects on the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Jeremiah 20:10–13; Psalm 69:8–10, 14, 17, 33–35; Romans 5:12–15; Matthew 10:26–33

Our commitment to Christ will be put to the test.

We will hear whispered warnings and denunciations, as Jeremiah does in today's First Reading. Even so-called friends will try to trap and trip us up.

For His sake we will bear insults and be made outcasts—even in our own homes, we hear in today's Psalm.

As Jeremiah tells us, we must expect that God will challenge our faith in Him, and probe our minds and hearts, to test the depths of our love.

"Do not be afraid," Jesus assures us three times in today's Gospel.

Though He may permit us to suffer for our faith, our Father will never forget or abandon us. As Jesus assures us today, everything unfolds in His providence, under His watchful gaze—even the falling of the tiniest sparrow to the ground. Each one of us is precious to Him.

Steadfast in this faith, we must resist the tactics of Satan. He is the enemy who seeks the ruin of our soul in Gehenna, or hell.

We are to seek God, as the Psalmist says. Zeal for the Lord's house, for the heavenly kingdom of the Father, should consume us, as it consumed Jesus (see John 2:17). As Jesus bore the insults of those who blasphemed God, so should we (see Romans 15:3).

By the gracious gift of Himself, Jesus bore the transgressions of the world, Paul tells us in today's Epistle. In rising from the dead, He has shown us that God rescues the life of the poor, that He does not spurn His own when they are in distress. In His great mercy, He will turn toward us, as well. He will deliver us from the power of the wicked.

That is why we proclaim His name from the housetops, as Jesus tells us. That is why we sing praise and offer thanksgiving in every Eucharist. We are confident in Jesus' promise—that we who declare our faith in Him before others will be remembered before our heavenly Father.