

Fr. Simon Sez

Welcome Fr. Joseph Holzhauser!: We are excited to welcome Fr. Joseph Holzhauser as our new pastor at next weekend's Masses in Hoven, Gettysburg, and Onida. He is presently pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Pierre. As of next Wednesday, July 5th at noon, he will become the pastor of our new pastorate which includes all points from the Hoven area to the Pierre area. I will become the Parochial Vicar (his assistant priest). He takes on the administrative responsibilities of our parishes (Thanks be to God!) so that I can focus on pastoral care, discipleship, and evangelization. He will have the Parish Council meetings (Pastoral and Finance). I will not be in attendance unless needed.

Happy and Blessed Fourth of July: This weekend, as an extension of the day, we celebrate the Fourth of July, Independence Day, for our nation. We celebrate winning our freedom from control by, what was in 1776, the British Empire. The Statue of Liberty stands as our symbol of freedom that defines us as a people and expresses our welcome for people to come share in how we find our fulfillment and happiness. People come to the United States to gain freedom from oppression, persecution, economic injustice, religion, ethnic cleansing, and other forms of labors and burdens. Great sacrifices were made for this freedom; so, it is very valuable to us. (The farther the younger generations get from the older generations who suffered greatly for the freedoms we enjoy today, the more these freedoms are likely to diminish.)

Our celebration this Fourth of July of our nation's independence should give us hope and encouragement that true human freedom, independence from influences of the flesh, world allurements, and personal sin is achievable for every individual human person. We should never get discouraged or fear the wrath of the Lord. For he said, "My kindness is established forever."

We need to realize we can never achieve any type of freedom alone, because we will never understand the human heart, ours or anybody else's. Only God understands the human heart. We can only respond to His invitation by His grace with a meek and humble heart, letting Him do His work in us as we do our part in cooperating in and doing his will. With this, we will truly fulfill our own promise to God as we sing this Sunday's responsorial refrain, "Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord."

The Conversion of a Priest and two Parishes : As your administrator, I leave a final message. I thank every one of our parish members, former and present these past two years, for your sincerity of heart and dedication. We went through some very trying times, but as you can see, walking by faith through our suffering has born good fruit in both parishes. Seriously, a book should be written. God's peace to all!

Fallout Shelters: If anyone ever needs a fallout shelter (none have been designated by Potter County), the Sacred Heart Rectory and Church basements are the best available.

To Find Our Lives: Scott Hahn Reflects on the Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



2 Kgs 4:8–11, 14–16; Ps 89:2–3, 16–19; Rom 6:3–4, 8–11; Mt 10:37–42

The liturgy this week continues to instruct us in the elements of discipleship. We're told that even the most humble among us have a share in the mission Christ gives to His Church.

We're not all called to the ministry of the Apostles or to be prophets like Elisha in today's First Reading. But each of us is called to a holy life (see 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:3).

At Baptism, our lives were joined forever to the Cross of Christ, as Paul tells us in today's Epistle. Baptized into His death, we're to renounce sin and live for God in Christ Jesus.

We are to follow Him, each of us taking up our personal cross, as Jesus says in today's Gospel. That doesn't mean we will all be asked to suffer a martyr's death. But each of us is called to self-denial, to the offering of our lives in service of God's plan.

Jesus must be elevated to first place in our lives—above even our closest bonds of kinship and love. By Baptism, we've been made part of a new family: the kingdom of God, the Church. We are to proclaim that kingdom with our lives, bringing our fathers, our mothers, and all men and women to live as little ones under the fatherhood of God and the kingship of the Holy One.

We do this by opening our hearts and homes to the service of the Lord, following the Shunnamite woman's example in today's First Reading. As Jesus tells us, we're to receive others—not only prophets but also little children, the poor, and the imprisoned—as we receive Christ Himself (see Matthew 18:5; 25:31–46).

As we sing in today's Psalm, we are to testify to His favors and kindness in our lives.

We're to hold fast to the promise—that if we have died with Christ, we shall also live, that if we lose our lives for His sake, we shall find our reward and walk forever in His countenance.