

“Time Away”

If you are reading this article at the time of publication, I am away out of town. It is the first real time away that I’ve had in a year. Since that time, I’ve been through the ending of my call at Hosanna in Columbia Station, the passing away of my sister-in-law, the beginning of a new call at a newly formed dual parish, and my family’s move from Brunswick to Elyria.

Although Sabra and I will be travelling over 2,000 miles in ten days between New York State and Nebraska, this time away for me will be one of those “be still and know that I am God” times (Psalm 46:10). I may well be away from the parish, but I am never away from the Lord (Psalm 139:7-10). Over the years, I discovered that vacations aren’t just about sight seeing or meeting up with family and friends: they’re about prayer and personal retreat time. They’re about meeting God in a different setting.

Even though I will be away, I will be thinking about you often and praying for you as well. About a year ago, at a National Day of Prayer Service, I heard one pastor say, “Some would say that the Church is out of touch and of little importance to many people today. I say that it is the hope of the world!” Yes, it is the hope of the world because of the hope that we have in Christ—the only true hope for this world and most definitely the only hope for eternity! That we at both St. John and Zion would be this hope in our respective communities is what I pray for as I spend time away.

While this ten-day long trip is a needed break, I’m sure that as I am headed back from Nebraska that I’ll be looking forward to being back and serving you once again. After my return on May 8th, the following three weekends are of note on our calendar. May 12-13 will be Mother’s Day Weekend—a holiday so loved in both our nation by many in the Church. Then, from May 26-28, will be Memorial Day Weekend and the remembrances that go with it.

Sandwiched in between is perhaps the most under-appreciated Church holiday—one that secular society hardly notices. This is the Feast of Pentecost which marks the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birthday of the Church. Without what took place on this date, the Good News of Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection would have never spread and would never have reached us. The first disciples boldly proclaimed what they had come to know in their Risen Lord. They truly could not help speaking about what they had seen and heard (Acts 4:20).

Now, it is our turn. As God’s people of today, there may well have been times where we’ve taken too much “time away” from actively proclaiming that same Good News about Christ that those first disciples couldn’t help but share. In this time of Pentecost that we are about to enter let us reflect on what Jesus meant to them and who He is meant to be to us. May the same Holy Spirit fall afresh on us as we look to be the hope of the world that we are truly called to be.

Your Brother in Christ,

Pastor Bill