



Pastor's Column from Guest-Columnist

St. Peter Catholic Church

May 27, 2018, The Most Holy Trinity

A Letter to the Parish from Seminarian Peter Fazzari

As the end of my pastoral year approaches, I want to express my gratitude to the community at Saint Peter parish for welcoming me and hosting me during this time. I feel like I am a real part of this community now, and it will be difficult to leave when the time comes. This has been a unique opportunity for me to really live out the life of a parish priest in the Diocese of Spokane, to take all of what I have learned in seminary and apply it to the real world in a practical way. It has been awesome! I have been the guinea pig for the pastoral year program this year, and I think that with my positive experience this year, it will be a continued practice for future seminarians in the Diocese.

I met with Bishop Daly several weeks ago to talk about how the year has gone, and I told him that Saint Peter has been an excellent assignment for two reasons. First, All Saints school is attached to the parish, and working with the kids at the school has been a joy for me as well as being very helpful for my discernment. I remember during the first week of the school year I was introducing myself to the various classes, and the younger students after hearing my name were convinced that I was *the* Saint Peter of Saint Peter parish. For this whole year, there have been kids calling me "Saint Peter" and looking at me with a sort of awe. But hey, I'm not going to correct them. Being a saint is pretty alright if you ask me. If it is God's will that I become a priest, I would sure hope that I get to serve at a parish with a school.

The second thing that makes this parish such a great assignment is that there are many families at this parish. A priest sacrifices the possibility of having his own family, with his own wife and children. However, a priest should never have to sacrifice his *experience* of family. I myself really need that family experience in order to be healthy and happy, and so I love when I get to spend time with people in their family context. This could take place at dinner in the family's home, a sporting event or play involving one of the kids, or any number of other things that allow me to just participate in everyday family life. One of the unique aspects of priesthood, and my favorite part about being a seminarian, is the intimacy of relationship that is just assumed because of who you are. When I sit down at the dinner table with people, I might not even know all their names, but I am already a part of the family at least for that evening. This is amazing to me, and the abundance of families at Saint Peter has allowed me to experience that on several occasions this year.

People have been asking me what I will be doing next year after I leave this parish. I still have two more years of school to go through at Catholic University of America in Washington D.C.; the second of those years would be spent as a deacon. However, I have asked the bishop for a year off before going back to D.C. and continuing on to diaconate. There are a few reasons for that decision. One is that I really want to be sure I know and understand God's will for me, and I have always had a strong attraction to married life. I love kids, and I would love to have a family of my own, and that may very well be something that God is calling me to do. This year then will allow me to discern married life more intently, and the desire for family more seriously. A second reason for the time off is so that I can have the opportunity to reconnect with my own family a little bit. I have six siblings, and I am very close to each of them. However, the strict schedule of seminary and school has made it difficult to visit them. I am very much looking forward to seeing my nieces and nephews, my brothers, and even a few cousins that I haven't seen in a long time. I will have the freedom to do all of that, and I can't wait!

In conclusion then, I thank all of you here at Saint Peter for having me here, for helping to form me and helping me to understand the nature of priestly life. I am very grateful for this experience and I am sad that it must end. You can all be assured of my continued prayers for this community, and I also ask that you pray for me; for my discernment and for my family. I am planning on leaving my home address with Mary Lee in the office, so if you ever want to get in touch, please do so! Who knows, maybe one day when Fr. Lewis becomes Pope, I'll be back at Saint Peter as your pastor. I can only imagine how confusing that would be for the school kids.

~ Peter Fazzari