

11<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
June 14, 2015

M & M's

**LOOK FOR SIMPLE CHANGES:** We can embrace the old and the new with "particulars" in celebrating the Eucharist, but always the MAINSTAY of the gift: Source and Summit of our Faith (Vatican II). Real presence.

Reaching into some of the particulars of decisions made by Pastoral Council and input from beyond:

- Our 30+ year-old altar server garments are barely hanging together. You will soon see black cassocks and surplices to replace them. In addition, Eucharistic bells will be in use by servers. (where did the last set go?) The cost is reasonable for all of the new additions. Donations for such specific needs welcomed.
- Parishes as nearby as St. Mary's in Kalkaska and Immaculate Conception of T.C., with many others in the Diocese, share some of these features.
- I am not a very quick study on these matters, but am grateful for advice from staff and parishioners. I support any changes and confident all will.

**The interview team for a new Faith Formation Director (DRE)** has been reviewing applicants with a great intensity over the last few months. We have had some quality people apply and therefore we have been forced to really think through a choice. We likely may announce the decision by next week.

We express gratitude for two-year interim director, Fred Robb. As a current teacher at St. Francis High School, he is switching to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton middle school to give special assistance in math. I celebrate Mass there on Tuesday, but he told me he would like to see Mass every day as often is the case at St. Francis. That says a lot about a convert to Catholicism. We will miss his Alabama "twang." He remains with us through Summer Vacation Bible School.

**And how about our Maintenance Man – Curt Wolf:** Curt has such an ability to get things done fast with professional style. Where does he get some of it? Likely on the ball diamond refereeing girls' softball! He is honored by being selected as one of the top 12 umpires in the state to handle the state finals in Lansing this weekend. Hundreds to choose from! A hand worth shaking!

**The death of a particular parishioner** has to be cautiously gathered together with all deaths. But I can properly single out the recent loss of Gene Veliquette. His sudden death last weekend at 67 recalls a native of the area, who alongside a large family, contributed so much to the cherry industry and our parish. He never saw himself as important, but everyone else did!

Our founding pastor, Msgr. Ed Thome, spoke at last Thursday's funeral with great emotion about Gene's first gift in getting us started. "We needed land." Msgr. recalled how he showed up at a meeting "unknown and appearing as a beggar." He pondered our needs and came up with a land swap with another party that brought \$100,000 to us. It was his first gift! A quickly shaped generous community brought these bricks onto their feet in 1988.

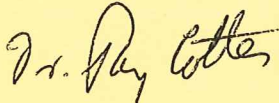
Gene was known as a true genius and dreamer. I had an unusual meeting with him a few months back. He asked to see me after Mass and of course I was delighted to: "hey, maybe another \$100,000 coming!" In written form, we went over his lengthy business and family experiences. "Mom and Dad: their lives made a difference!" A few siblings, 11 in all, spoke so impressively of this unique family member at the vigil service. And I came to realize something very significant in his quiet generous style. He came to us and gave in our founding years while he was in his late thirties and never really rich. He more than just "occupied" that back pew.

A few classic lines he wrote in the script: "We (twin brother Dean) returned to MSU 'happy as pigs in deep mud, pleased as punch'. That blissful feeling was short lived as that night temperatures dropped to 26 degrees and sobered up to the harsh reality that 'there is many a slip between cup and the lip' a good bloom did not guarantee a full crop." His English grammar was not the best, but his passionate work ethic and treating employees with such dignity describe so much of our landscape.

A strong salute to artful landscaping and risky undertakings by the cherry farmers and winery folks of the region.

**This Sunday's gospel details Christ's style of teaching with parables.** He informs the people that is how he will teach. I attempt to teach with portraits of people who come to me with such diverse joys and sufferings. A priest feels greatly honored in such exchanges. I am learning to be a better listener. However, it took me a long time to develop my "20 minute rule" or forced interruption: "We have been talking for 20 minutes and you have yet to bring up the name of Jesus Christ!" In the context of prayer and Eucharist, a priest has little personal offerings other than to push us all toward the quiet of Christ.

In His trust,



Fr. Ray Cotter

On Gene's card of memory:

*"Here's to the crazy ones, the misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers, the round pegs in the square holes...the ones who see things differently – they're not fond of rules... You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them, but the only thing you can't do is ignore them because they change things...they push the human race forward, and while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius, because the ones who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, are the ones who do."*

– Steve Jobs

" but, respectfully Steve":

Christ and the Apostles created that thought up.  
We now call ourselves Christian.