

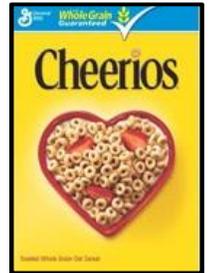
✠ A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR ✠



“IF I HAVE HEARD IT ONCE, I’VE HEARD IT A THOUSAND TIMES”

With the passage of time, there are certain things that we hear over, and over, and over again. So much so in fact, that those things no longer grab our attention; or like some signs, they no longer (like cigarette butts alongside the curb, or graffiti (not art) on a building wall) catch our eye. Because we don’t see anything we don’t say anything. (Please, if you see something, say something, do something.)

As true as that is for all of us outside our absolutely beautiful church, it is as equally true for us inside that church as well. (Some people actually think that Cheerios, candy, cell phones, etc. belong in church.) Consider the following “inside the church” announcements. Some of them you hear on a weekly basis, some on a monthly basis, and still others perhaps on an annual basis. At first, hearing these announcements generated some sort of internal response from hearers which eventually led to a tangible response that could be seen not just on faces but in a change of behaviour/practice. We became not just “hearers but doers” (cf. Saint James 1:22).



- “Next Sunday is First Works of Mercy, ...”
have we forgotten the poor in Freeport?
- “Next Sunday is Tie One On with a Hat and ...”
have we forgotten how to dress (in church and outside of church)?
- “Please remember that absolutely no food, candy, ...”
have we forgotten what churches are for?
- “Your pledge to the *Catholic Ministries Appeal* ...”
have we forgotten that charity only begins at home?
- “Our Holy Redeemer needs Altar Servers, Ushers, Catechists, ...”
have we forgotten about *following* and *sharing* Christ?

If the *City of God* (of which we sing) is going to come to completion in Freeport, then as familiar as these announcements are, and as expected as they may have become, they still warrant consideration, as well as a change of practice. And the Holy Season of Lent is a good time for that consideration and change. **We should never grow tired from this weekly/monthly/annual exercise, for as Saint Paul says in his Letter to the Galatians: “for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we don’t give up” (Galatians VI:9).**

Your Pastor, Priests, Deacons, and Staff will not give up making announcements because Jesus doesn’t give up making announcements. Just think of the *Ash Wednesday words* we’ve heard over and over and over again:



- “Return to Me with your whole heart” (JL II:12).
- “Repent and believe in the Gospel” (Saint Mark I:15).
- “Pray” (Saint Matthew VI:5). “Fast” (Saint Matthew VI:XVI).
- “Give alms” (Saint Matthew VI:2).

Just think of the Parables that we’ve heard over and over and over again. Parables like The Prodigal Son. Perhaps in today’s hearing of that Parable a *younger son* might “return to the Lord with his whole heart”; an older son might “repent and believe in the Gospel”; and a Father might pray, fast, and give alms in thanksgiving for both his sons. Thanks be to God that we’ve not only heard it once, but we’ve heard it a thousand times.