

St. Francis de Sales Parish

All glory comes from daring to begin.

St. Francis de Sales



Meanderings... | Parish Bulletin – January 9 & 10, 2010

BY REV. ROY ROBERTS

THE swelling of the congregation over the Christmas celebration usually proves to be a mixed blessing. Of course it is a fuller expression of our identity at the St. Francis de Sales Community. That being said, it also amplifies some issues with protocol in a sacred place.

I remember the first time I saw the Pope in 1984 at Downsvew. I suppose I had this grandiose expectation that being present for a Mass with the Holy Father would be something remarkably sacred and dripping with sanctity. The actual experience was anything but. Such has been the diminishing respect for our place of Worship.

The number of gentlemen wearing their hats during Mass, the number of people chewing gum (which breaks the fast and excludes them from reception of communion at that celebration) are just a few of the habits that show that we have lost the sense of the sacred. With lots of spare time on my hands during the break, I picked up a broom and was helping the custodians get a head start on cleaning the floors. What I encountered 'floored' me. There was foodstuff, personal trash, and oodles of gum stuck to the floor. Our Worship Space was more akin to an arena than a church.

We need to recapture who we are and what we are about when we gather as community. On our First Communion retreats we try to instill in our young people proper etiquette in our Worship Space. For instance, when we enter at the beginning and leave at the end, the proper ritual action is to bow to the altar.

If we happen to be going into the little chapel of reservation, where the tabernacle is, the proper mark of respect is to genuflect upon entering and again upon departing. A bow is always acceptable for those with bad hockey knees. The chapel of reservation is always a place of profound silence.

Gentlemen do not wear hats at worship. Chewing gum before or during Mass is wholly unacceptable and does indeed break the one hour fast from food prior to receiving communion.

Sacredness is an attitude that needs to be fostered, and as much as this is a spiritual home, it is a place beyond. Our magnificent doors, our design, our purpose all speak to this being more than our cozy homes where anything goes.

It is a sacred space where we do sacred things with sacred attitudes. That is plainly a respect for the import of who we are and what we do.

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