

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – MAY 2, 2021

Dear Parishioners and Parents,

Last week I was interviewed by a Public Relations Officer for the Jesuit Order. They wanted to do an article on two Jesuits, one elderly, and one quite new.

I tried to sum up my life in these words: “Life is a mountain climb to the summit. Some days are sunny, some foggy, some stumbling over rock falls, and some in darkness. But, one must always keep climbing, Jesus went before. Follow him!”

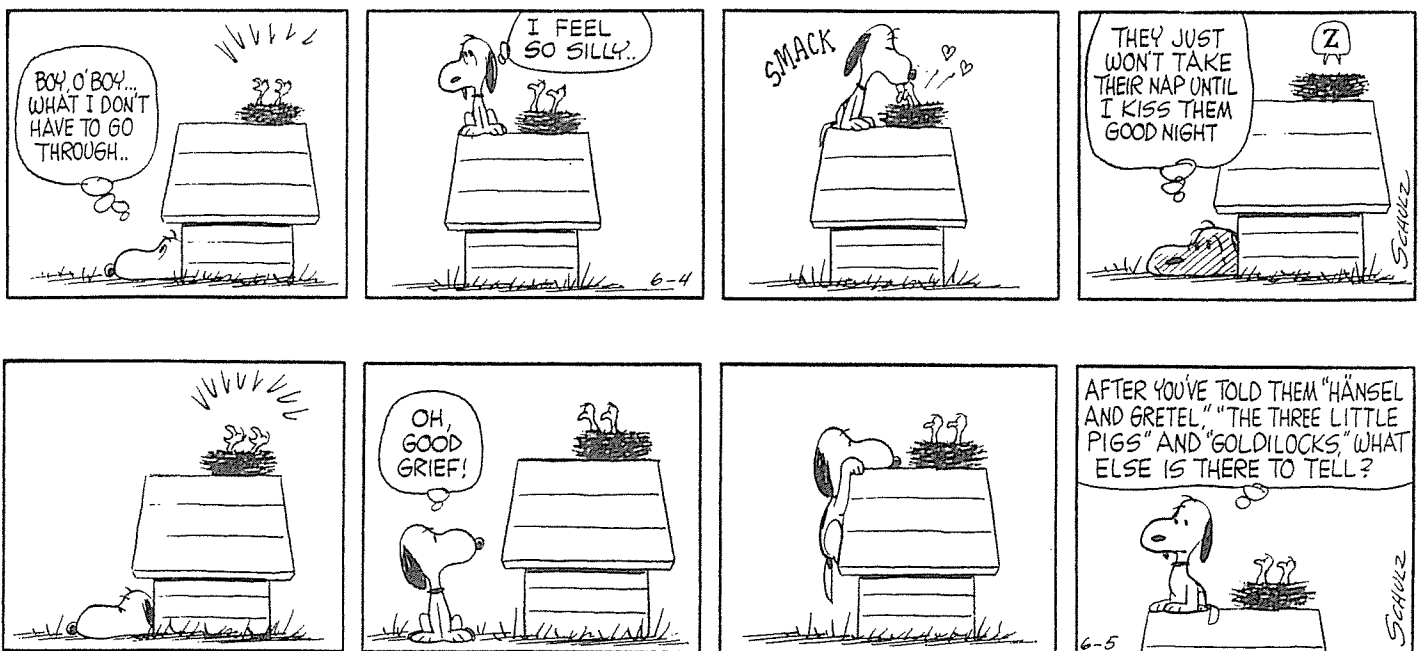
People seldom question God when everything is going well. When events go badly, we question and often lose perspective.

The Gospel today has an interesting statement as Jesus talks about the vine and the branches. The Father is the vine grower and Jesus is the vine. It is the next statement that strikes me. “The Father takes away every branch that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does he prunes to bear more fruit.”

God wants results. God wants fruit from the vine, not simply words. The second part of that statement brings some fright.

Every branch that produces fruit he will prune to bear more fruit. Pruning hurts. When we are pruned, we hurt and wonder why the pruning, why the pain. In the Lord’s words, it is to produce more fruit.

This is also the Lord’s response after the Resurrection. He tells his disciples, “Wasn’t it necessary the Lord should suffer and in this way enter into his glory?” Glory is the manifestation of God’s holiness and God’s power. In the suffering we are being prepared for a manifestation of God’s holiness and God’s power.



World Day of Prayer for Vocations Letter 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

Sunday, April 25, 2021 was the Fourth Sunday of Easter. We continue as a Church to celebrate the new life that comes from the Good News of the empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The Fourth Sunday of Easter is also known as “Good Shepherd Sunday.” Together, we reflect on the beautiful image of the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep.

It is the custom on this day for the Church to celebrate the gift of vocations. In his 2021 World Day of Vocations Message, and in this year of Year of Saint Joseph, Pope Francis speaks about Saint Joseph not only as “an extraordinary figure” but also as someone “so close to our own human experience.”

The Holy Father notes that Saint Joseph embodies three words that are keys to our respective vocations: dream, service, and fidelity.

Today we behold all those men and women who, through their vocations made Jesus the dream of their lives, serving him through the love of their neighbor, and embracing fidelity every day in their commitment. In a particular way, we give thanks for the many “good shepherds” in our lives, most notably our priests. We pray for them and we echo the words of Pope Francis, “May Saint Joseph, protector of vocations, accompany you with his fatherly heart.”

Please join me in praying for an increase of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Together, let us pray, “That all may be one.”

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David J. Bonnar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "B".

Most Reverend David J. Bonnar
Bishop of Youngstown

Are You Showing Signs of A Religious Vocation?

- Do you enjoy conversing with God through prayer?
- Does ministry in your parish or service to others energize you?
- Does the idea to be and give more as a brother, sister or priest keep coming back time and again?
- Does your relationship with God invigorate you to the point of wanting to share the Good News with others?.
- Do you feel a recurring tug in your heart to give yourself to God and to serve others?

If you answer, “Yes,” to two or more of these, then you may have a vocation to religious life.

Could God Be Calling You To Be A Priest?

God made you for a unique purpose. Even before you were born, he knew your vocation, your mission in life. And if you are a faithful Catholic man, God may be calling you for a higher purpose—to become a Catholic priest.

Priests have a critical mission: to bring people to Jesus and Jesus to people. They are spiritual fathers to thousands of Catholics. They preach the Gospel and offer the sacrifice of the Mass. In short, priests are living witnesses of Christ in the world—men of strong character who stand out in our secular culture.

A good priest is a spiritual hero, a man who sacrifices himself for the people of God. Is Jesus calling you to be his priest?

The Priesthood Is A Calling

Christ asks of some men the sacrifice of their lives in following him as his more intimate companions. From all eternity, certain men are called to the priesthood. It is a call inscribed in their nature and because of this, is a call that will bring them fulfillment.

A Priest Acts In Persona Christi

A Priest Wields A Sacred Power

A Priest's Soul Changes Forever