

June 21, 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This weekend we begin our summer schedule and we are beginning it a week earlier than we have in the past. But last week's attendance, particularly at the 11:30, is testimony that we are not beginning too early – our numbers are already starting to drop noticeably. PLEASE remember that while you are away on summer breaks and holidays that our parish still needs your support! Our regular expenses continue through the summer (air conditioning does not come free from the heavens!) and we will soon be purchasing student books and teacher manuals for our revised faith formation program. Keep in mind that tuition for our faith formation programs does NOT cover the whole cost of the program – it is subsidized by the parish budget which is supported by your weekly offerings. If you are going away for the summer, please consider writing a check before you leave to support the parish in your absence. Those who have signed on for our Electronic Funds Transfer method of contributing to the parish will not have to worry about summer contributions because that's all in place. Are you interested in this method of supporting your parish and its work year-round? Just let me know at FrAustinFleming@aol.com and I will send you the forms to connect you to this program.

On the weekend of July 7/8 a Franciscan missionary priest, Fr. Rafael, will preach at all the Masses on the needs of missionary efforts. The special collection taken that day (baskets will be provided at the doors of the church) will go to the archdiocesan Propagation of the Faith through which the archdiocese supports the missionary efforts of many religious communities.

Perhaps you've heard of something called "PopSearch." It's the Boston Pops equivalent of American Idol – but without glitz and tackiness of AI's approach. Hundreds of contestants have sent in tapes to PopSearch and they were first narrowed down to a "Sweet Sixteen" and then to three finalists, one of whom is Maria Perry. Maria now lives with her husband, John, in Kansas City but is from Quincy where I had my first assignment as a priest (1973-1978). Maria sang in the folk group I directed "back in the day" at St. Ann Parish in Wollaston. On June 28 the winner of PopSearch 2007 will be chosen when the three finalists sing at Symphony Hall. If you'd like to hear Maria and the other two finalists sing, please go to www.bostonpops.org. I'll be there on this Thursday night to cheer on my friend.

Your prompt return of the faith formation program registration which you received in the mail is critical for the success of our program – as is your willingness to support the program by YOUR volunteer efforts! Reminder: please be sure to indicate on the registration forms the number and names of adults who will be participating in our Faith Festivals.

The Kennedy annulment is in the news this week. It's not easy to comment on this for one simple reason: only the couple involved (and the Tribunal) know the contents of that annulment process and without that knowledge it's very difficult –impossible– to make any judgments about it. Over 34 years as a priest I have assisted a number of people in their annulment proceedings. So often –so very often– the process reveals realities unknown even to those who were closest to the man and woman involved in the marriage.

There are those who say that annulments are a form of "Catholic divorce." In general, I disagree with that, although I also think the process is sometimes seriously flawed. My word of caution here is that books and the media are **filled** with both **lack** of information and **mis**-information. If you are interested in doing a little reading about this, go to www.canonlaw.info/blog.html and read a canon lawyer's take on all of this.

Sincerely,
Fr. Fleming