

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

August 17, 2007

As I mentioned in my homily last weekend and in the bulletin, I've started writing a blog. A blog (short for *web log*) is an individual's web page on the internet on which the blogger writes and posts on a variety of topics (or some, on one theme). The title of my blog is *A Concord Pastor Comments: Commentary on life and ministry in my parish, in the Roman Catholic Church and in the world around us.* [www.ConcordPastor.blogspot.com](http://www.ConcordPastor.blogspot.com) I've thoroughly enjoyed writing for this effort and have had the time to do so over the past month. On Tuesday, five days short of a month on the internet, my sitemeter recorded my 1,000<sup>th</sup> visit from readers. Each item I post on the blog includes an opportunity for a reader to post a response which is published (under a pseudonym or anonymously, unless the responder wants to self-identify.)

If you're online, please check out my blog. If you are not online, you might have a family member or friend who would share this with you or print out what I've posted. *Below* are some samples of my posts. (I've also written on papal statements, saints on the church calendar, diocesan politics, gambling in the Commonwealth, restaurant reviews from my vacation and some humor, too.) Unfortunately, the graphics, artwork and videos I've posted online can't be reproduced here but you'll get the gist. I **will** continue to write my letters in the bulletin and will occasionally post items from my blog in this space, too.

Peace,  
Fr. Fleming

### **Pondering Today's Word**

*Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD swept the sea with a strong east wind throughout the night and so turned it into dry land. When the water was thus divided, the children of Israel marched into the midst of the sea on dry land, with the water like a wall to their right and to their left. (Exodus 14:21 – 15:1)*

Let us pray...

O God,  
so many of us stand before rough seas storming with tempests and trials,  
keeping us from the freedom we long for  
in our flesh, our minds and our hearts.

Send the strong wind of your Spirit throughout the dark nights of our souls  
and sweep the teeming seas  
with the power of your healing broom.

Lead us, your children, through troubled waters  
and be yourself the dry land upon which our steps become sure  
and our paths find purpose.

Deliver us, Lord, and be our deliverance. Amen.

### **Bad News for Preachers of the Good News!**

Have you heard that radio stations are now selling blocks of advertising time in units of adlets and blinks? Adlets are 5 seconds long and blinks only 2 seconds! Folks are tuning out and changing

stations more quickly than ever before. As an indication of people's dwindling attention spans, this is bad news for the homilist trying to hold the attention of an audience ranging in age from toddlers to elders for 5 to 15 minutes. After how many minutes -or seconds- are the people in the Sunday assembly tuning out the homily and tuning in a spectrum of other thoughts? It's true that it's more difficult to write a good short homily than it is to write a good long one - and perhaps therein lies the answer to the preacher's dilemma: less may indeed be more.

### **A Day at the Beach**

*Last summer I shared in my bulletin letter some observations about people at the beach. Here are two short vignettes of the same kind from this afternoon...*

A boy and his father approach the spot they'll stake out as their territory on the shore. As dad spreads the blanket and other beach equipment, his 6-year-old stands, hands on hips, facing the water and announces, "Dad, we are going to play in the OCEAN!" Dad looks up from his chores and joins in, "Yes - We - Are!"

They head towards the water, hand in hand, and I wonder at the boy's joy and the dad's love for his son and the gift the beach has just offered them, and they each other...

Not far away from my own piece of beach, a mom, dad and daughter are enjoying the shade of a large orange sherbet umbrella. Mom's in one of those chairs with stubby legs, just right for the sand. Dad and daughter are on the family blanket. The little girl, 8 or 9 years old, asks her father, "Dad, are you going in the water?" "No," says dad, "I'm just gonna hang out here with you."

A smile as broad as the shoreline breaks on the girl's face as she settles into her father's company and he into hers...

Years from now neither the boy nor the girl may remember these exchanges on a sunny, long gone August afternoon. Still, such moments of joy and contentment will have made an invisible impression on young hearts, an imprint of a time when, for a moment, all seemed right with the world.

May no storm or tide erase what was written in the sand at Herring Cove this afternoon...

### **Quote of the Day**

*"We Irish have a streak of pessimism which sustains us in times of joy."*

- Raymond Boland, Bishop emeritus of the Kansas City-St. Joseph, MO diocese, in his homily at the Mass marking the 50th anniversary of his ordination in June.

### **Pondering Today's Word**

*He spoke to them another parable. "The Kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened..." (Matthew 13:31-35*

Let us pray...

God of kitchen counters,

guide our hands as we mix the yeast of faith  
with the ingredients of our lives...

Teach us to follow the Word of your recipe,  
measuring carefully  
everything you call for...

Leaven us with wisdom  
and make us rise:  
loaves of love, bread for others...